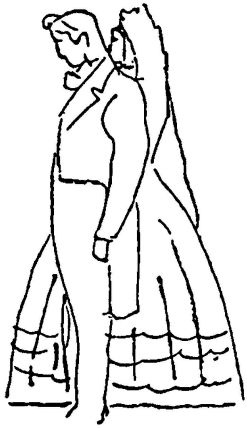
A. PISEMSKY

The SIMPLETON



FOREIGN LANGUAGES
PUBLISHING HOUSE
Moscow

CLASSICS
OF
RUSSIAN
LITERATURE

Алексѣй Плещеевъ

А. ПИСЕМСКИЙ

ТЮФЯК

ИЗДАТЕЛЬСТВО ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ
НА ИНОСТРАННЫХ ЯЗЫКАХ
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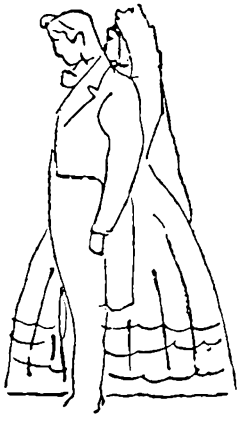

FOREIGN LANGUAGES
PUBLISHING HOUSE
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It is hard to pass judgement on family affairs, indeed, impossible.

LOCAL SAYING

I

THE FEMALE RELATIVE

Once—the end of August it was—Perepetuya Petrovna had been enjoying her after-dinner nap for a very long time. The bedroom was as dark as the inside of a closed barrel, to discourage the flies, which are particularly tiresome during this month. Perepetuya Petrovna awoke some time after five and lay for several moments wondering whether she was really awake and trying to remember if it were day or night. In a word, she had slept too much, as frequently happens with healthy people who lie down after a square meal to rest their mortal frame. From this semi-conscious state Perepetuya Petrovna was aroused by the entrance of a maid-servant carrying a lighted candle.

"Palashka! Is it you?" said the good lady, blinking to protect her eyes against the unpleasant sensation of light.

"Yes, Ma'am."

"What's the matter?"

"Feoktista Savvishna has come."

"Why didn't you tell me at once, you booby?" exclaimed Perepetuya Petrovna, jumping out of bed, if a fifty-year-old woman weighing fifteen stone may be said to jump out of bed. Donning her tulle mourning-cap she sailed slowly into the drawing-room with a melancholy expression on her face. Hostess and guest exchanged kisses in silence and seated themselves on the sofa.

"In my sad situation," said Perepetuya Petrovna in mournful tones, "I mostly keep to my room, I even draw the curtain. Somehow it's still sadder in the light."

"No wonder, no wonder!" said the guest, in tones equally tearful, shaking her head. "But I tell you plainly it's a sin to give way like that! Of course your misfortune is great. At one and the same time as you might say your brother-in-law dies and your sister is stricken with paralysis. But you must submit, Perepetuya Petrovna. It can't be helped. There's nothing you can do about it. Believe me, I have come on purpose to see how you are bearing up. Come now, think of your health—you're not so young, dear friend."

Her friend made no answer to these consolatory words. In the middle of her guest's monologue she began to sob, covering her face with her pocket-handkerchief, a traditional recourse of weepers, extremely convenient for Perepetuya Petrovna, who did not look her best in moments of grief. Tears somehow did not suit her plump countenance, with its rather coarse features and utter lack of expression. Feoktista Savvishna, who in appearance and weight was the living image of Perepetuya Petrovna, regarded her for some moments with commiseration, and then fell to weeping herself.

"I can't bear to see her! To see my darling!" Perepetuya Petrovna at last brought out amidst her sobs. "I can't even bear to think of her."

"That's wrong, Perepetuya Petrovna," interrupted the

consoler. "You can't bring your brother-in-law back, he's dead. But your sister will recover, as God is my judge. My dear departed was twice stricken with paralysis, his whole face was pulled on one side, but he recovered and so will she."

"No, my dear," said Perepetuya Petrovna. "I asked Karl Ivanych—she'll never recover. Oh, God! Oh, God! I have a pain in my own chest! I never had one before. He says it all began with her going off her head, with the hypochondria."

"And what's the hypochondria? Nothing!" protested Feoktista Savvishna. "You don't have to look far for an example. My niece Sasha's husband, Basunov, had the hypochondria a whole year, but it passed. He's quite well now. And what did they discover? He was worried about his estate being mortgaged. His wife thought and thought, and decided all she could do was to mortgage her own village and redeem his, and he recovered immediately."

"It all happened in such a strange way," mused Perepetuya Petrovna. "She seemed all right at first after Vasily Petrovich died. She grieved, of course, but she didn't cry. No tears. Every day I either went to see her or sent to know how she was. You'll hardly believe me, but I lay awake night after night, God himself must have kept me up. And suddenly, my dear, on the eve of Whitsunday her housekeeper Marfushka comes to me and says: 'Our mistress is always so downcast.' 'How can she help it?' I said. 'It's only ignorant people like you who don't care who dies—your mother or your husband.' But she said (and you know she's very intelligent, very sensible, though she is only a simple woman): 'No, Ma'am', she said. 'There's something very strange about our mistress. She keeps sending us all away and turning over Vasily Petrovich's and Pavel Vasilich's letters, and yesterday she seemed to be talking to herself. And no one can make out what she is saying.' I thought I should go out of my mind when I

heard this! Oh, Lord, I can hardly bear to talk about it! Sitting here on this sofa, my hands and feet turned cold. They dressed me, and me almost unconscious, they put me in my carriage and took me to her and what did I see? Completely paralyzed. She didn't even seem to know me." Perepetuya Petrovna paused and heaved a sigh. Feoktista Savvishna sat on in silence, and then said:

"Yes, it's what you might call a regular disaster. True grief! Anyone can see what a blow it has been to her. I know that from myself. Oh, how hard it is to bear! The loss of a husband, now, what could be worse? Who is dearer than a husband? Nobody. A friend, as they say, for life. Where are Anna Petrovna's children?"

"Liza has written to say she and her husband are coming to live here for good. And Pavel came back from Moscow three months ago and is living here—he has passed all his examinations. He was in the university, you know."

"Yes, I heard. How is he, poor thing? His plight is terrible. He was what they call a real mother's darling."

Perepetuya Petrovna sighed again.

"Oh, he's all right. Men! They don't have the same feelings, you know. Especially Pavel. He was always so cold. Take me, for instance—you might say I am no distant relation, his own aunt. But he never comes to see me, you know, for a friendly chat, to ask my advice, give me the news. Never. When he does come he sits there dangling his foot. I'm being very frank with you, Feoktista Savvishna."

"Come now, Perepetuya Petrovna," cut in Feoktista Savvishna. "You know me, I believe. I'm no gossip. I've been living here nearly ten years, thank the Lord, and you might say I've never been mixed up in a single scandal."

"That's why I'm telling you all this. It's sad to go about with a load on your heart—especially when it's a case of unpleasantness in the family," continued Perepetuya Petrovna. "Oh, Lord! I've forgotten what we were talking

about again! Oh, yes, Pavel Vasilich! Though I'm his own aunt I shall always say this: he's not a gambler, nor a rake, he doesn't drink, nothing of that sort, but he doesn't seem so very well educated, and yet look at the education he's had! Six years at school and five years in Moscow. And even now always reading, but nothing seems to come of it. No manners, you know, none of that tact other young men have, no clever, serious conversation. You never saw such laziness, he never takes any exercise. Sitting about or lying down all day. Just a simpleton, nothing but a simpleton. I called him the Simpleton when he was quite a little boy."

"Isn't it strange? I suppose he won't be going into the army then."

"He a soldier! But that's my sister's fault. Of course one mustn't say anything about her now that she's ill. But she never taught him how to behave. He was never really brought up. It was all 'Pavel! Pavel!' Whatever Pavel did was right. Pavel never came into the drawing-room when there were visitors, just stayed in his room. Well done, dear boy—avoid good society! She sent him to learn dancing, but in a month it was: 'I don't want to learn to dance, Mummy, I have no talent for it.' Talent! Every young man has enough talent for that. And *that* was right, too! 'Don't learn, Son, be a bear!' And the same thing at meals. I always quarrelled with him. Never eats black bread and now complains of his health. He used not to like it when I came. I was always at him: 'Sit up, Pavel! Where are your manners, Pavel? Go and wash your hands!' And all that sort of thing. Why shouldn't he learn to behave like a well brought-up lad? My sister's a good woman but she was much too lenient a mother. They say one never notices defects in one's own children. Nonsense! If I had children I would be the first to see their faults. Liza's quite different. They sent her away to be brought up by other people, when she was a little girl, and she grew up quite different.

She was only four years old when Vasily Petrovich's sister, the one that was a schoolmistress, took her—of course when she came back here she began to lose a lot of her nice manners. A good thing I found a suitor for her, otherwise she would probably still be an old maid. Nobody would have noticed her. Well, at first everything went well, they were glad she was getting married, but afterwards they began to complain. Vasily Petrovich was always saying: 'Why did you send our Liza so far away from us, Sister? She ought to have lived nearer. Her husband's a stranger to us, God knows what sort of a life she has.' And how did it turn out? He's a splendid man, writes me the most affectionate letters by every post: 'Esteemed Auntie,' and expresses himself so cleverly. A very clever man, he is."

Feoktista Savvishna punctuated her friend's speech with shakes of the head and sighs.

"What a number of misfortunes you have had, Perepetuya Petrovna!" she said as soon as she could get in a word. "Especially when one remembers your family feelings. How sad it is, really, to see things not going as one would like!"

"It can't be helped, Feoktista Savvishna. My whole life I might say has been full of trouble. My youth was passed at the bedside of a sick father, I never so much as entered the House of God for six years, I tended him as they say day and night, without a murmur. The only pleasure I allowed myself was to go to the shops and buy myself dresses. I was always very fond of clothes. They said afterwards that he left me twice as much as my sisters, but that's nonsense. It's all over now and I haven't so much as a kopek on my conscience. And what have I to live for now? Sister's children are not the same as your own. Nowadays you can't even count on your *own* children, let alone nephews and nieces."

"Quite so, quite so!" agreed Feoktista Savvishna.

The conversation proceeded on these lines a little longer, but at last Feoktista Savvishna rose to go. Perepetuya Petrovna implored her to spend the evening with her, but Feoktista Savvishna firmly refused. She felt an irresistible desire to pass on all that she had heard from Perepetuya Petrovna about her family misfortunes in a certain friendly house. The hostess, seeing that it was impossible to keep her visitor for the evening, decided, for want of something better to do, to fulfil a sacred duty by visiting her sick sister, and the two ladies left the house together, each entering her own carriage.

Feoktista Savvishna.... But here I must tarry a moment and describe for my reader's benefit the friendly house towards which she was driving. The family which resided in it consisted of a father, a mother, and two daughters, and belonged to the best society in the gubernia. Vladimir Andreich Kurayev was the founder of this family. He kept open house, was conspicuous in society, rather caustic in his talk, and fond of holding forth, indeed, eloquent. In appearance he was highly presentable, if not imposing, though a little severe. People said he was something of a domestic tyrant, that his family and dependents all danced to his piping, and that he sometimes even showed his tyrannical ways in company, although he obviously desired social prestige for his wife, whom he invariably addressed by her name and patronymic, Marya Ivanovna. He often consulted her, asking her opinion, and saying: "What do you think, Marya Ivanovna? What do you say to that, Marya Ivanovna?" When making purchases in a shop he would say to the salesman: "Send it to my house, my good fellow, I will consult Marya Ivanovna." When the purchases were sent, Vladimir Andreich would keep them on credit. As for Marya Ivanovna, she was an utterly insipid individual, serving as a mere feeble reflection of her spouse. Whatever she said you were sure to have heard from Vladimir Andreich a few weeks before. There were, however,

rumours that Marya Ivanovna sometimes actually spoke for herself, occasionally expressed an opinion, as when, for instance, she complained that Vladimir Andreich never let her have her own way in anything, and all because he had married her without a dowry, and that he was a cunning man and only agreeable in front of visitors. She complained of her daughters, too, especially the elder, who, according to Marya Ivanovna, would heed no one but her father. Marya Ivanovna was generally regarded as not a particularly intelligent woman, but good-natured, and no scandal-monger. The two daughters, Julie and Nadezhda, were the prettiest girls in the town, or at any rate their parents thought so. The officers stationed in the town called the elder "the proud brunette" and the younger "the playful blonde." The brunette, who was like her father, behaved very discreetly before company, and perhaps really was a little proud. At home, especially in her own room, she was a great deal more talkative and was always scolding her maid for not looking after her young mistresses' toilet properly. The blonde behaved just the same in society as she did at home, that is to say, she was garrulous and reckless, was for ever laughing with the servants, never scolded them, and dressed herself very quickly for balls.

Somewhat ambiguous rumours were rife about the Kurayevs' fortune. In my opinion, judging by the way they lived, they should have been wealthy. But there were certain suspicious persons who, apparently, knew very well that the Kurayevs had only one hundred and fifty souls, heavily mortgaged, and not a penny in cash, and that, though Vladimir Andreich claimed to be for ever receiving legacies, he really made a living, according to these same suspicious folk, by conducting somewhat unsavoury affairs, borrowing wherever he could get a loan, and entering upon all sorts of shady contracts. This is what the suspicious persons declared.

Feoktista Savvishna, although she might have been included among the above-mentioned suspicious persons, always entered this friendly house with awe, almost with servility, as she now did. She bowed mincingly to the lady of the house and the girls, her head slightly on one side, but to Vladimir Andreich, probably as a mark of particular respect, she bowed still lower. As soon as she had seated herself she brought out her news: Madame Makhmurova had been very rude to Madame Podslepova; Bakhtiarov had bought another horse from her cousin; Avgustin Avgustinych had been suffering from a cold for nearly three months, so that, despite his iron will, he had broken down and cried. Vladimir Andreich sprawled in his armchair and took not the least notice of Feoktista Savvishna's gossip, and the young ladies were scarcely more attentive. For want of anything better to do just then they were turning over the leaves of a book of fashion-plates, commenting on them to one another in undertones: "That must be a tulle bertha," said one. "No, *ma chère*, it's lace," rejoined the other, and so on. The only one who listened to Feoktista Savvishna was Marya Ivanovna, but even she soon withdrew to her own room.

"What are you doing, Julie Vladimirovna?" asked Feoktista Savvishna, turning to the young ladies.

"Looking through a magazine," replied the brunette.

"And what are you looking at?"

"Pictures."

Feoktista Savvishna moved nearer to the young ladies.

"What magazine? A fashion book?"

"Yes, a fashion book."

"Latest number?"

"Yes, the latest number."

"You must dress smartly, young ladies. You'll have a new beau this winter."

"There are always plenty of them," replied the brunette, making a face.

"Who is he?" asked the blonde.

"A lively young man.... And monstrous handsome.... Rich, too."

"Who may that be?" asked Vladimir Andreich, suddenly interested.

"Pavel Vasilich, Madame Beshmeteva's son. You know him, I presume."

"I do. But where do his riches come from?"

"I was only joking. He gave up his dancing lessons after the first month. He's still quite young, but he's a regular bear. Does nothing but sit and dangle his foot. Even his relatives call him the Simpleton. And not particularly clever either, it seems. Hasn't a word to say for himself."

"The wretch!" remarked the brunette.

"Is he good-looking?" asked the blonde.

"Not particularly. Hair always rumpled, doesn't wash his hands."

"Pooh, how revolting! I wonder you care to talk about him!" said the brunette.

"Why do they call him the Simpleton?" asked the blonde.

"He's so clumsy, no manners," replied Feoktista Savvishna.

"Isn't that funny? 'Simpleton,' " continued the blonde. "I shall make a point of dancing with him. I love dancing with those unfortunates."

"That's just what you won't be allowed to do," put in Vladimir Andreich. "I have observed your habit of dancing with all sorts of riffraff. And why? Because you are spoiled. If you had to worry about your future you'd know whom to dance with. Yes, you would," he concluded meaningly and went out of the room.

The blonde blushed.

The next day Feoktista Savvishna related, at a christening in the house of that cousin of hers from whom Bakhtiarov had bought a horse, that Perepetuya Petrovna was still weeping for her brother-in-law and was extremely

displeased with her nephew from Moscow, who had turned out to be a rough fellow without any manners, a regular lout. The only ones who seemed to pay any attention to this tale of hers were a pock-marked lady who knew Perepetuya Petrovna, and an old gentleman who claimed to be in the good graces of Anna Petrovna. But in a few days, thanks to the efforts of Feoktista Savvishna and the above-mentioned individuals, it was known to many that the late Mr. Beshmetev's son, a crank and a lout, and apparently a nitwit, a regular simpleton, had come to town.

II

BROTHER, SISTER AND AUNT

While rumours about young Beshmetev were going the rounds, he himself was seated in his chamber, deep in thought. Not far from his chair sat a young woman. This was his sister, Liza, as Perepetuya Petrovna called her. Beshmetev could certainly lay no claims to being considered a handsome or a well set-up man. He was of middle height, but stoop-shouldered and hollow-chested, and had very big hands. He was not in the least what ladies call "well-made," indeed he was positively clumsy. His movements betrayed languor and lack of agility. But anybody who had taken the trouble to examine his pallid face with its irregular features, would gradually have discovered something very taking in his large blue eyes. They say such a reflection of thought and feeling is not to be observed in certain people at first glance. His flaxen hair was not rumpled, as Feoktista Savvishna had declared—it was cut rather short and, of course, carelessly brushed, which, however, went well with his great pale forehead. He was negligently dressed.

Lizaveta Vasilyevna's appearance was quite another thing. Tall, with an expressive intelligent countenance and

luxuriant tresses, picturesquely gathered in a single braid at the back of her head, she was almost a beauty in comparison to her brother. Her attire was distinguished by a neatness and taste which, as is generally admitted, very few provincial ladies are able to achieve. There was a shade of melancholy in this young woman's face which made her look older than her twenty-five years. The brother and sister sat absorbed in meditation. Lizaveta Vasilyevna's eyes were red with weeping. The young people had only just left the bedside of their sick mother. The old woman was stricken with paralysis, which had deprived her of all power of movement and speech and almost completely obscured her mental processes. The only person she remembered and recognized was her son Pavel. She lay most of the time in a stupor, occasionally interrupted by hysterical fits of laughing and crying. Lizaveta Vasilyevna she had not recognized at all. Pavel tried in vain to remind her of his sister, who, for her part, spoke of her husband and children. But the old woman understood not a word, only looking at Pavel and smiling, as if there were something she wanted to say. And after a few moments she fell unconscious again.

Pavel, who had been instructed by the doctor not to worry his mother in her present state, called his sister away, and the two of them went and sat down in the drawing-room. At first the conversation between them flagged. They had not seen one another for such a long time, they were in such grief, that it seemed as if no words could express what was going on in their hearts at this moment, and they could only exchange affectionate glances.

"How long it is since you and I met, Paul!" said Lizaveta Vasilyevna at last.

"It is, Liza."

"Have I changed since you last saw me?"

"You've changed greatly."

"I have two children. My eldest boy's the image of you."

"How about your husband, Liza?"

"My husband, Brother? He's rather flighty. Still, he's a good man and I think he loves me."

"What made you marry him?" asked Pavel, glancing at his sister.

"It was the will of God. My aunt made the match. She persuaded Papa and Mama, telling them of the infinite wealth of my husband."

"Well? And did it turn out to be true?"

"True enough," replied the young woman with a rueful smile.

"Do you remember what you told me?"

"What did I tell you?"

"That you–"

The young woman smiled.

"That's all over long ago," she said, blushing.

"And they didn't press you to marry the other?"

"No, Paul, I agreed of my own free will."

"That cannot be true."

"Why can't it be true? But don't let's talk about that, Paul! It was nothing but folly!"

"I met Bakhtiarov the other day."

"Why, is he here?" she asked, concealing her agitation with an effort. But her voice broke, and her lips turned pale.

Pavel gazed steadily at his sister in silence.

"Let's talk about you," said Lizaveta Vasilyevna, evidently anxious to change the subject. "What do you intend to do with yourself?"

It was now Pavel's turn to be embarrassed.

"I don't know," he said after a short pause.

"Did you think of getting a post here?"

"No."

"Then you must mean to go away, and we shall be parted again for a long time."

"Yes, I ought to go away."

"And Mama? How can you leave her?"

Pavel paused for thought.

"I'm in a very awkward position," he said. "I had every intention of leaving."

"Stay with us, Brother!"

"I can't, Liza, I must read for my Master of Arts degree."

"And what will that lead to?"

"It might lead to something very good. It's the best path for me to take."

"Go then."

"And Mama?"

Lizaveta Vasilyevna made no reply for some time.

"She might get better," she said at last. "And then you could go. Or she could go to you."

This conversation was interrupted by the arrival of Perepetuya Petrovna.

"Lizanka! My dear! Is it you?" she cried, almost running into the room, and throwing herself on her niece's neck. After this came half a dozen kisses, then tears of joy.

"Have you been here long, dearie?" asked the aunt, calming down a little and seating herself on the sofa.

"I arrived this morning."

"Thank God you've come! How is my sister? I haven't asked after her."

"My mother has gone to sleep," replied Pavel.

"Thank God! Thank God! Let her sleep! How are you, Pavel? I didn't notice you. Put a footstool under my feet, can't you? What a backward fellow you are, you never think of anything!" Pavel brought her a footstool. "Look at me, my pet," Perepetuya Petrovna continued, turning to her niece. "You've improved in looks, you've filled out. Anyone can see you don't have a bad time, my dear! You're not carrying again, are you? Well, and how's your husband? I haven't seen the dear man for ages."

"He stayed at home. He's quite well, thank God," replied Lizaveta Vasilyevna, kissing her aunt's hand.

Perepetuya Petrovna loved her niece more than her nephew, for the former's affectionate ways.

"And how are the children? Mikhailo Nikolaich wrote that they're simply pets."

"I'll bring them to see you tomorrow, Auntie."

"Mind you do! Don't come without them, now! Pavel, don't sit there sulking! Come nearer to us, Sir! Can't you even talk to your sister? It must be five years since you met."

"He and I have talked and wept our fill, Auntie."

"You're lucky, my dear. He isn't very talkative when he's with me. What did he say to you?"

"He told me about his affairs."

"He never tells me a thing. How are his affairs? Say something, Sir, can't you? Why are you so secretive? I'm not a stranger, am I? I don't bear you any ill-will, do I? I don't think I ever showed you anything but affection, did I? For shame, Pavel! How are your affairs going?"

"My sister can tell you better. She knows all about it," replied Pavel, enduring his aunt's complaints with the utmost patience.

"What affairs?" repeated the inquisitive Perepetuya Petrovna, this time addressing her niece.

"You see, Auntie, my brother has to go to Moscow."

"Whatever for?" almost shrieked Perepetuya Petrovna.

"He must sit for his Master of Arts degree."

"What's that? A post or something?"

"It's the same as a post," put in Pavel.

"And is the salary big?"

"There isn't any salary."

"What sort of a post d'you call that? You can get plenty of posts like that here. How can you leave your mother?"

"That's just what worries me, Auntie."

"Why don't you take a post here? Fedosya Parfentyev-

na's son has one, and he's just as good as you. That's what really may be called a fine young fellow, with lovely manners. You should hear him chatter in French! And he has a post. They say he'll soon be getting promotion. And why shouldn't you take a post? Think of your mother! Remember the sacrifices she has made for you! Never spared her health, as they say! The trouble she had with you, and she was not so young herself! And you don't even want to stay to console her last moments, as they say! Liza's another matter. Your mother never loved her so much, and anyhow she's what you call cut off from the parent stem. She has duties of her own, a family. Sometimes, when she would be glad to do anything for her mother she wouldn't be able to, she has her husband to look after, but you're free, you're a man. No, Sir, it's wrong! God will not send you happiness your whole life for that! It's no good scowling, it's the truth I'm speaking!"

"It's all true, and I know it myself, Auntie," rejoined Pavel.

"Evidently you don't, since you intend to act otherwise."

"I mean to go if Mama herself permits me to, and later on I'll send for her to live with me."

As he spoke these last words Perepetuya Petrovna turned as red as a beetroot.

"No, Pavel Vasilich, begging your pardon!" she said in harsh ringing tones. "We won't allow you to do that! I shall never allow you to take away my sick sister. Who do you take us for, I should like to know? Is she a stranger to us? She's as close to our heart, closer perhaps, than to yours. You're too clever by half. We're to let him drag his mother with him, and who knows?—put her in the power of some low hussy!"

"Auntie!" cried Pavel.

"Don't you dare even to think about that!" stormed Perepetuya Petrovna. "She's only a sick woman, and he may manage to get her away! As sure as I'm sitting here I'd go

to the authorities before I'd allow that, I would! I'll send a petition to the governor."

"Calm yourself, Auntie," said Lizaveta Vasilyevna.

"No, Sir, you can't do that! A pretty fellow! What'll he say next, I wonder? Let him go alone, it'll kill her. But at least it won't be on *my* conscience. I suppose he's long ago been wanting to do away with her."

Pavel turned crimson.

"How can you, Auntie!" he said and went to his own room.

Just then the patient moaned.

"She groaned, my dear one!" said Perepetuya Petrovna in quite a different voice and went into her sister's bedroom. "Well, my dear! Here's good news for you! Both your chicks under your wings again! Oh, my darling. Look how well she looks today! Let me kiss your dear hand!"

"Call Pavel, my dear," she added, turning to her niece.

Lizaveta Vasilyevna went to fetch her brother. Pavel was standing leaning against the window, quite unconscious that the tears were streaming down his cheeks.

"Come to Mama, Brother," said Lizaveta Vasilyevna gently.

Pavel started as if she had waked him. Then, seeing it was his sister, he embraced her, kissed her warmly, dried his tears and went to his mother.

"And here's Pavel! Go to your mother, be kind to her!" said Perepetuya Petrovna, sitting on the side of her sister's bed.

The patient, paying no heed to her words, took her son's hand and looked into his face.

"Don't worry, Sister, he won't go away," said Perepetuya Petrovna. "How can he? He couldn't even think of doing so. God would punish him!"

Tears came to the eyes of the sick woman.

"He's not going away, my dear, he isn't! As if he could!

We won't let him! Tell her yourself you're not going away, Sir! Why can't you speak?"

The sick woman burst out into wild laughter, followed by a flood of tears and a fit of sobbing.

"Look at that, Pavel Vasilich!" shrieked Perepetuya Petrovna, in a frenzy. "Look what you've driven your mother to! Shameless creature! Don't you even fear God?"

"Paul, comfort Mama!" said Lizaveta Vasilyevna.

"I won't go away, Mama," Pavel at last brought out.

But the old woman did not stop crying.

"I'm not going, Mama, I'll stay beside you all my life," he said, kissing his mother.

Lizaveta Vasilyevna and Perepetuya Petrovna wept. The latter even sobbed loudly, exclaiming:

"High time, Sir! What ingratitude! What hard-heartedness!"

This scene continued for nearly half an hour. At last the sick woman calmed down and fell asleep. Perepetuya Petrovna drove off with Lizaveta Vasilyevna, whose husband had sent a carriage for her, and Pavel went back to his room.

"My God! What am I to do?" he said, flinging out his hands, and he threw himself on his bed.

He lay for a whole hour without moving, then got up, apparently in the grip of violent agitation. His hands shook, his face, usually so calm and pensive, wore a strange expression, all his muscles seemed to be in motion, his eyes shone with a feverish gleam. He started looking through his papers and, setting aside a small heap, began tearing up the rest. In a few minutes all the learned manuscripts—the lectures, the commentaries, the essays—were torn into pieces. He then tried to begin on his books, but the bindings resisted his efforts and he contented himself with merely piling them up next the stove, evidently with the intention of burning them later. This fit of energy did not seem in keeping with Pavel's character. He was ob-

viously not of those reckless individuals who shout, break windows, beat their servants and even their wives, if they have such, when their tempers are roused, and then, a quarter of an hour later, calmly smoke a pipe. After having disposed so savagely of his papers, my student fell exhausted on the bed. At midnight, however, he got up, apparently somewhat tranquillized, for he began carefully picking up the torn pieces of paper, and removed the books from the stove to their former place. But it was morning before he fell asleep.

III

MIKHAILO NIKOLAICH MASUROV

The next day, shortly after noon, Mikhailo Nikolaich Masurov, the husband of Lizaveta Vasilyevna, stood in the yard in front of his house, bare-headed, wearing a silk tunic and wide breeches, and holding a pipe between his teeth and a whip in his hand. A horse brought for his inspection by a Gypsy was being put through its paces at the end of a rope. Masurov had curly hair, a handsome healthy face and a fine moustache. His silk tunic, wide breeches, even the whip in his hand and the pipe between his teeth suited him perfectly. He would probably not have looked half so well in a frock-coat or evening dress.

The Gypsy praised the horse's points, while Masurov enumerated its defects like an expert.

"Look how well she lifts her front legs, Master! You could sail a ship under them."

"She lifts her front legs all right, but she drags her back legs. One doesn't go far on a two-legged animal, Brother. Bring her over here, Vanka!" Vanka led the horse up to his master. "This is where she drags," said Masurov, striking the animal on its rump so that it swayed to one side. "And she has hardly any neck. And a hoof like

a mere hack's. That means she's no thoroughbred, Brother."

"Hoof?" repeated the Gypsy, lifting the horse's foot. "Just you look at her hoof!"

"Where are you off to, Sasha?" cried Masurov, seizing by her skirt a maid-servant who came running out of the house with an iron in her hand.

"Don't, Sir, I must get to my ironing! I'll burn you, I will! There's the mistress looking out of the window!"

"Never mind the mistress!" Masurov attempted to get his arm round the girl's waist, but she touched the overbold hand with her iron, so that he had to snatch it away, and the maid, taking advantage of the moment of liberty, dashed into the house. "What a spitfire! But a pretty little thing," said Masurov looking after her.

The maid was really quite pretty. Lizaveta Vasilyevna, despite her husband's weakness for the fair sex, did not, as so many wives do, seek to protect herself by choosing ugly or elderly maid-servants. It was true that she had been sitting at the window just then, with her brother. But when she saw her husband transfer his attention from the horse to the maid she rose and seated herself at the sofa, inviting Pavel to sit beside her. He had, however, seen all, and turning away from the window glanced at his sister. Her cheeks were burning, she was ashamed for her husband, but neither of them said a word.

A paper of some sort lay on the round table next the sofa. Lizaveta Vasilyevna picked it up mechanically and unfolded it. It was a note to the following effect: "Come today. We are expecting you. You were properly diddled, yesterday. You shouldn't have depended on that importunate knave." Lizaveta Vasilyevna turned pale. She thoroughly understood the meaning of such notes. Her anxiety became the greater when she remembered that, contrary to her usual habit, she had left the key of her jewel-case in her room. "He must have been gambling yesterday," she

thought, and went into her bedroom. Alas! Her suspicions were justified. The jewel-box was not even locked. Of the five thousand rubles, the sole sum remaining from the sale by auction of her husband's estate, three thousand were gone. It was easy to see that Lizaveta Vasilyevna felt the loss of this money acutely. Unable to restrain herself she burst into tears. She did not attempt to conceal her grief from her brother, telling him that their estate in the Saratov Gubernia had been sold and that only five thousand rubles, of which her fine husband had already managed to gamble away more than half, remained from the sale. Now they had nothing left but her own fortune, a matter of thirty souls. And how were they to live on that? Above all, how were they to bring up their children, of whom they now had two? This is what Pavel had learned of his sister's domestic affairs. She begged him to speak to her husband. Pavel promised to do so.

"But you begin, Sister–I can't speak to him all of a sudden," he said.

Just then the voice of Masurov was heard.

"Ugh! Oh, my Lord!" he cried, entering the room. "Oh, I shall die!" He sank into a chair. "Oh, I'm done up! I am really!" And he burst into loud peals of laughter.

"What makes you so merry?" asked Lizaveta Vasilyevna.

"Oh, my darling! You can't imagine what I've just seen! Fancy.... I can't speak for laughing...." And again his speech was interrupted by a volley of ringing laughter.

The brother and sister smiled involuntarily at the sight of Mikhailo Nikolaich's naïve gaiety.

"But what's happened?" asked Lizaveta Vasilyevna.

"You'll die with laughter," continued Masurov, wiping his eyes. "Just fancy–I went into the kitchen and what did I see? That lanky Marfushka was sitting astride her husband and beating his face with her fists, and he, he was drunk, you know, could only flap his arms." He showed

them how the drunken husband had flapped his arms, and began roaring with laughter again, but Lizaveta Vasilyevna only shook her head and Pavel scowled more heavily than ever. "And that man," he said to himself, "is a husband and a father, who yesterday gambled away almost the last penny of his children's property. And he doesn't even feel remorse. He goes about the huts dying of laughter at the sight of his house serfs' depravity." Mikhailo Nikolaich went on laughing for a long time and Pavel turned and began talking softly to his sister.

"Come, darling," said Masurov, quietening down at last and turning to his wife. "Tell them to bring us something to eat—a slice of *gruyère* and a drop of sherry, you know. Excuse me for running away from you, Brother. It's a passion with me, you see. No help for it, I'm an old horse-breeder. Deuce take it, what a stud I had! What d'you think of this, Pavel Vasilich—my father left me two thousand mares alone."

Pavel gazed at his brother-in-law in astonishment. Lizaveta Vasilyevna only smiled. She was apparently accustomed to her husband's boasts.

"You always add two noughts, Michel," she said.

"I like that! What do you know about it? By the time you arrived on the scene I had long ago lost it all at cards. Deuce take it, I've lost a lot of money at cards in my day!"

"And did you lose much yesterday?" asked Lizaveta Vasilyevna.

Masurov was thrown into confusion.

"I didn't lose any yesterday," he stuttered.

"Where are the three thousand?"

Masurov reddened but made no reply, only glancing significantly at Pavel, who seemed to be plunged in thought.

"Never mind Pavel!" said Lizaveta Vasilyevna. "I can say what I like in front of my brother. What do you think,

Paul, is it right to lose three thousand rubles in a single evening?"

"Very wrong," said Pavel. "A married man has no right to risk a ruble, not to mention thousands."

It was obvious that it had cost him a great effort to say as much.

"Aren't you ashamed, Mikhailo Nikolaich?" said Lizaveta Vasilyevna.

"Come, darling, forgive me," said Masurov, going up to his wife. "I had such devilish luck at first but towards the end of the evening you'd think he had a devil whispering in his ear—he took every card, the old rat. You'd hardly believe it—in a quarter of an hour he cleaned me out. Then he suggested playing for IOUs. He said he could see I was an honourable man."

"Better and better. How much did you lose that way?"

"Not a kopek, darling. Do you think I'm mad? Do you think I don't understand? Whatever your brother says, I'm a family man, I'd be ashamed to do that. I did lose the three thousand, and I'm not going to deny it. I lost it. Only forgive me this time, dearest Liza, and I'll never play cards any more, I swear. To hell with the cards! I hate them! I felt quite sick when I waked up this morning and remembered."

"No wonder, after such losses," put in Pavel.

"Come, my darling," continued Masurov, caressing his wife. "Say you forgive me! Let me kiss your hand."

Lizaveta Vasilyevna did not seem to have much faith in her husband's remorse.

"You're incorrigible, Michel!" she said, taking away her hand.

"Lizochka, my own darling. Let me just kiss the tip of your little finger. Shall I kneel to you?" Here he actually got down on his knees before his wife. "Pavel Vasilich, tell Liza to let me have her hand."

Pavel said nothing. He evidently found the scene un-

pleasant. Lizaveta Vasilyevna turned a glance of pity very much akin to contempt on her husband, but she gave him her hand, which he kissed resoundingly.

"That's the way. I'm free. My wife has forgiven me," cried Masurov, getting up and rubbing his hands. "Well, darling, now tell them to give us sherry and a snack. Oh, my darling! I have an adorable wife, deuce take it!" he continued, looking after the departing figure of Lizaveta Vasilyevna: "I'm awfully fond of her, you know, I'm even afraid of her."

"You should be more careful with your money," said Pavel, after his sister had left the room. "You're not a rich man and you have a family."

"Why, Brother, I'm positively stingy! Ask my wife. Yesterday, of course, I did blunder—God knows how it happened! But what of that? I still have a splendid fortune—a hundred and fifty serfs in the Orel Gubernia in excellent condition, orchards alone yielding an income of five thousand a year."

"My sister told me," rejoined Pavel, unable to endure these lies, "that the only estate left to you is the one in this gubernia."

"That's nonsense, that really is nonsense!" yelled Masurov, no whit abashed. "Don't believe her, she fibs like anything."

Refreshments were brought in.

"Let's drink a tumbler of sherry, dear Brother, in honour of our acquaintance."

Pavel refused a tumbler, drinking only a small wineglass, but Masurov tossed off a full glass.

"Look here, Brother," he began, sitting down beside Pavel. "Will you do something for me?"

"What?"

"No, no, you must promise beforehand not to refuse."

"I don't know what you're going to ask me."

"Couldn't you lend me two hundred rubles? I'm fairly

cleaned out, upon my word, it's quite embarrassing. But for God's sake, don't tell the wife," he continued in a whisper. "She can't stand that. I need a trifle, you know, for my personal expenses."

Pavel's flesh crept, he felt utter disgust for his brother-in-law.

"I have no money," he said coldly.

"Deuce take it, that's too bad! Couldn't you at least tell me of anyone I could borrow from?" continued the quite-unembarrassed Masurov. "We could have a spree."

To this Pavel made no reply, only rising in silence and making for the next room.

"Where are you off to?" Masurov asked him.

"I must find my sister. I want to say good-bye to her."

"Don't go. She'll be here in a minute. I see you're not one for a bit of fun. But if—" The rest of this speech was cut off by the entrance of Lizaveta Vasilyevna.

"Good-bye, Sister," said Pavel, unable to repress his feelings of disgust.

"Won't you dine with us, Paul?"

Pavel would have liked to refuse, but he felt sorry for his sister, and sat down again. A few minutes later Lizaveta Vasilyevna's eldest boy was brought in by the nurse. Without a word, but with an oblique glance at Pavel's unfamiliar face, the child ran up to his mother and hid his face in her lap. Lizaveta Vasilyevna lifted him up and kissed him. Pavel looked at his nephew and seemed to forget the unpleasant impression made on him by his brother-in-law. The child was a pretty little thing.

"Who's that, Pavlik?" Lizaveta Vasilyevna asked him, pointing to her brother.

The child looked at Pavel in silence.

"I'll whisper in your ear," continued the mother, bending back his head and whispering.

"So who is it?" she repeated, again pointing to Paul.

"Nunky," whispered the child.

"Pavlik, come here," shouted Masurov, who wished to fondle his son.

The child looked at him but showed no intention of leaving his mother.

"Come here, I tell you," repeated Masurov, stretching out his hands. "Liza, darling, send him to me."

"Go to your father," said Lizaveta Vasilyevna, lifting Pavlik from her lap.

The child began unwillingly to cross the room, but as soon as he reached his papa, he burst out crying. Mikhailo Nikolaich as usual seized his chubby cheek with his finger and thumb and began shaking him.

"What a baby! Starts crying at once."

Lizaveta Vasilyevna rose in silence and took the child, setting it on her lap again. He stopped crying immediately.

The dinner passed in the usual way. Pavel and Lizaveta Vasilyevna ate little and hardly spoke, whereas Mikhailo Nikolaich ate a great deal and chattered volubly. He recounted extremely strange things about himself to his brother-in-law. He said, for instance, that when he was serving in the Turkish campaign he had had his right shin chopped off by a certain Janissary with a Mephistophelian moustache, but that the regimental surgeon, a regular dab at his business, in comparison with whom all the Petersburg doctors were not worth a fig, had sewn it on again, and not even his own, which had been lost in the stress of battle, but the shin of a dead soldier. Nor was he particularly modest about his own physical strength and his prowess as a hunter, assuring his hearers with many strange oaths that he had once checked six horses by holding on to the back wheel of a carriage, had brought snipe down with bullets and caught, with the help of four deerhounds, as many as forty wolves a day.

Pavel left his sister's house with a feeling of profound sadness. "She is deeply unhappy," he told himself. "She, so

kind, so noble! What is this husband of hers? What is this man with whom she is destined to spend her whole life? A debauchee, a liar, ignorant, and if I am not mistaken even base."

IV

PAVEL

With the approach of winter the town which was the scene of these events began to show a considerable increase in liveliness. All sorts of assemblies and evening parties were arranged. Society, as tradition has it, was of the most brilliant, so that a certain gentleman, after living a whole winter in the town, on returning to Petersburg referred to it in the most flattering terms, calling its ladies fragrant blossoms, and its society everything that was respectable and elegant. Everyone participated in the merriment, even Perepetuya Petrovna visited two or three houses for a game of preference. She was extremely displeased with her nephew. "Is that a young man?" she exclaimed. "I ask you! Won't show himself in society! No, but really there's nothing gentlemanly about him, he's more like a divinity student. Look at the other young men! So lively, and yet so polite to ladies. It does you good to see them. But there's nothing of all this in him. He can hardly find a word to say even to us, and never speaks at all to other people. What's the matter with him? His clothes are perfect, you never saw such a frock-coat, the very finest cloth, and he has a splendid carriage-and-pair. His father, thanks be, left two town sleighs alone. His mother would never have refused him the use of them, at least he could have shown himself among decent people. But no, my dear Sir, he just sits at home, didn't even go out calling at Christmas!" Her other nephew, however, Mikhailo Nikolaich Masurov, appeared everywhere, and paid calls on every possible festive occasion. According

to his aunt he had gained great popularity for himself, and all by being cordial and polite. With her, too, he was extremely friendly. She began to feel ever increasing sentiments of kinship for him. "He's no blood relation, and yet he's better than my own nephew, he is really! Calls, tells me where he's been, what he's seen and where he's going next! A delightful man!"

Perepetuya Petrovna's strictures on her nephew were fully justified. He was extremely taciturn, had no manners, and at this time never went anywhere, despite the fact that he owned a frock-coat of the finest cloth and a two-horse sleigh. Since, however, a man's acts are frequently the result of extremely remote causes I do not consider it superfluous to say a few words here about the childhood and youth of my hero.

Pavel was born into this world a thin sickly infant, not expected by anyone to survive the first day of his life. But people were wrong—Pavel lived. Throughout his infancy he hardly made a sound, except to grunt when he was hungry. He did not begin to walk till he was nearly three and began to talk still later. His mother was fond of expatiating on his beautiful disposition. And, indeed, he was a remarkably quiet and obedient child, and remarkably soft-hearted. The housekeeper's son, a boy of Pavel's age, brought into the nursery-room to play with the little gentleman, used to drink his tea and take possession of all his toys, not even hesitating to strike him an occasional blow. Pavel was never angry at this, endured it all in silence, and never complained to his mama. The servants were equally delighted with the little gentleman, who never told tales on them, and in whose presence they felt free to do whatever they liked. Pavel never romped or ran about, preferring to sit on the stove-ledge in the nursery, his feet tucked under him. His favourite amusement was to cut figures with remarkably small waists out of paper and colour them. He would play with them for days as if they were dolls, walk

them up and down the ledge, make them bow to one another, whispering to himself the while. Pavel was a very plain child, and terribly messy. His nankeen trousers were always stained. His boots wore out quickly, a fact very hard to explain, since Pavel, as I have already said, sat almost all the time. The child seemed to understand his own unattractiveness, and was never pleased when guests came, especially well-dressed ones, who often brought with them the prettiest children, to whom they spoke French. He felt ashamed, sitting in the drawing-room with them, and would hide his hands and feet, or rather, would try to hide in the corner that was his favourite resting-place. It seemed to him that everyone regarded him with scorn and pity. No one but his mother ever showed him any affection. Young ladies never called him to give him a kiss and talk to him, as they did to pretty children. There really was something repellent in his old-looking face.

Vasily Petrovich, Pavel's father, was tried in court for some offence, after which nobody ever came to see them any more. Pavel was delighted and from this time hardly saw anyone but his mother and father. A divinity student was employed for his education. Perepetuya Petrovna was in despair and almost quarrelled with her sister, assuring her that divinity students are incapable of teaching anything, having themselves no manners whatever. One day (Pavel was by now over twelve), a distant relative from Petersburg came to visit the Beshmetevs. Obviously this was no ordinary gentleman, for his hosts were immeasurably pleased to see him, receiving him with something like servility and continually addressing him as Your Excellency.

"Who's that, Vasily—your son?" asked the General when they were at table, glancing at Pavel.

"Yes, Your Excellency," replied Vasily Petrovich.

"What are you learning, my dear?" asked the General, turning to the child.

"We haven't begun teaching him much yet, owing to his

delicate health," replied the mother. "A divinity student sometimes comes to him."

The General shook his head.

"What's his health got to do with it? Why ruin the child, by making an ignoramus of him?" Pavel's eyes filled with tears. "Look, he's crying," continued the General. "Perhaps he understands the evil your blind and ignorant love inflicts on him. Weep, Brother, ask to be taught. Otherwise you are lost irrevocably."

The General held forth for a long time in the same tone, assuring the parents in the most convincing manner that an uneducated man is a wild beast, and that if they did not understand this, it was because they were themselves uneducated and behind the times.

Vasily Petrovich and Anna Petrovna, shamed by the General, decided the very next day to start preparing their son for the Gymnasium. This decision delighted Pavel. He quite understood that the General had been right, and heartily wished to study. The place of the divinity student, who, by the way, shared a certain failing of Alexander the Great, was taken by the parish priest and a teacher of mathematics from the district school. The child made remarkable progress and in a year was quite ready to enter the first class at school. Pasha was taken there to sit for his examination. God alone knows what it cost my hero to go to school for the first time. But he passed the examination brilliantly, though frantically embarrassed. His comrades received him as new boys are usually received. He had hardly taken his seat in the class-room when a tall lad went up to him and dealt him a smashing blow on the forehead, exclaiming: "Hey, old chap, what a bulgy noddle!" After this another playful spirit went and complained of him to the teacher, claiming that Pavel kept pushing him and preventing him from doing his lesson, though the poor boy had sat almost motionless. The teacher, who was fond of putting the fear of God into new boys,

made Pavel kneel on the floor the whole day. After this Pavel Beshmetev was afraid of the teachers and avoided his comrades, usually trying to get to school just before the beginning of lessons, when the other boys were already in their seats. But learning came very easily to him.

The years slipped past unnoticeably. Pavel grew from a plain and timid child into an awkward youth. The sight of her nephew threw Perepetuya Petrovna into despair and she never called him anything but the Simpleton. At school Pavel was never riotous, never rude to the teachers, and was good at his lessons. The director called him the "moral Mr. Beshmetev" but his comrades dubbed him a grind. Nobody particularly disliked him, but they had little respect for him. Almost all his comrades, some out of envy, and others simply for the fun of the thing, teased him, they declared that he slept in his nurse's room and that he spent the whole evening cramming his lessons, that he dared not so much as dream of smoking a pipe, or his mother would whip him. Pavel endured all this mockery in silence, but anyone could see how unhappy it made him. He hated being with his schoolmates, never went to the homes of any of them, or invited them to his own home. Pasha did not sit and cram all day as his schoolmates believed. He did not even work much, mostly sitting beside his mother and relating something to her. Anna Petrovna would listen intently to her son, though she understood very little of what he said. But most of all Pavel liked to be alone, lying on his bed and dreaming. At eighteen years he completed his school studies and began making preparations to go to Moscow and enter the university. Anna Petrovna began weeping a whole month before the departure of her son, fell into a deep swoon at the moment of parting, and did not stop crying for six months.

In Moscow Pavel found himself board and lodging near the Smolensk Street, in the house of the widow of a government official by the name of Podkhlebova, on the rec-

ommendation of Perepetuya Petrovna, who had once been fast friends with this lady. Madame Podkhlebova was greatly afraid of giving house-room to a young man, for there are so many drunkards, rakes and hooligans amongst young men. But Perepetuya Petrovna's letter had been very urgent, and Madame Podkhlebova agreed, especially since the third room in her apartment was not the slightest use to her. Soon the fears of the good lady were completely allayed–the young man showed himself to be even more modest and quiet than she liked. She nicknamed him her old man, and told all her friends that her lodger had been sent to her by God himself, that he was a regular phenomenon, that even she had not been so modest in her girlhood, that he never went anywhere but the university, and there was no question of him going in for drinking and that sort of thing. He would come home, eat his dinner, lie down, read a book, write a little, and was obviously a great student of the sciences. He hardly even entered into conversation with her, though she did her best to put him at his ease.

Pavel made his appearance at the university looking at once anxious and severe, seated himself at the back of the hall, and throughout the examinations hardly exchanged a word with anyone. Later he attended lectures in exactly the same way: entered, sat down somewhere at the back, took down the professor's words, and then went home. He did not make friends with any of his fellow-students, and was not even on bowing terms with anyone. At home, as his landlady said, he led the most monotonous existence, that is to say, dined, studied, and then lay on his bed thinking, or rather, dreaming. It was his dream to become a professor in due course. This dream had visited him ever since he passed his first-year examinations with honours. He vividly imagined the hours of the first lecture, the attentive audience, to whom he would expound a strictly thought-out scientific theory, the general astonishment at

his learning, followed first by public, and then world-wide fame. In time, however, this exclusively meditative life began to pall on him. If he could only have gone to the theatre, he thought, say, to see Schiller's *Kabale und Liebe*! But he had no money for that–barely enough to cover his general expenses and for the purchase of books. If only he could have gone to houses where there were young girls, but alas, he had not a single acquaintance! He would often go out at ten or eleven at night and roam the streets aimlessly, only stopping every now and then outside some brightly lighted house. All was bright within, he could see moving figures fantastically lit up. It seemed to him that everything within must be happy and gay. Lying on his bed of an evening he would listen with strange sensations to the sound of women's voices coming from his landlady's room. She was often visited by lady friends, but they were all, as if to spite him, extremely plain.

Two years before graduating Pavel Beshmetev, returning home for the holidays, saw his sister for the first time. At first he was extremely shy of her, but Liza, more lively than her brother, managed gradually to accustom him to her society, and by the end of the holidays he would sit beside her talking all day long. Before he went back she hinted to him that a certain Bakhtiarov was her preference above all others. This seemed to interest Pavel exceedingly. He alluded to the circumstance in every letter he wrote her. In his third year Beshmetev changed his apartment. His landlady, Madame Podkhlebova, despite the fact that she had been a widow for twelve years, was a most virtuous and moral lady. At first, as we have seen, she had been afraid of taking a young student into her home, but her fears soon quietened down when this student turned out to be a regular little old man, and she very soon became quite fond of him. She used to have dinner with him, invited him to tea, and often visited him in his room, even begging him to wear his dressing-gown in front of her,

justly remarking that since they lived in the same house one couldn't always be watching out for proprieties. Besides . . . the widow, for all her forty-five years, still had a heart in her bosom, capable of loving. When Beshmetev left for the holidays she was horrified to realize that she cherished for her lodger not merely the mild fondness that comes of habit, but a feeling that was tenderer, more passionate, for throughout the three months of his absence she felt infinitely sad and lonely, and when he came back she was frantically pleased to see him, and displayed great embarrassment. A somewhat bold idea formed itself in her mind–she dreamed of marrying Pavel after he graduated, and in the meantime of inspiring him with a passion for herself. From this moment Pavel's life became a great deal more comfortable. New furniture appeared in his room, even new curtains were hung at the window. As for his meals, the widow fed him like a prize pig. She began spending the whole day in his room, which, apparently, Pavel got very tired of, for whenever his landlady entered his room he hastened to open a book and begin reading. "I won't be in your way, I'll just sit here," she would say, and taking a seat opposite him would gaze steadily at him, sighing, and occasionally filling his pipe. The widow put Pavel's coldness down to timidity. She felt an irrepressible desire to have an explanation with her lodger and to encourage him. On the tenth of October, which happened to be her birthday, she apparently fulfilled her intentions. She plied Pavel with wine during supper and afterwards went to his room and stayed there a long time. But as soon as daylight appeared the next morning Pavel went out and took another room. He never went back to the widow, but sent his new landlord, an honest Teuton, living on his spouse's skill in midwifery, to get his things. Madame Podkhlebova had apparently not expected such an act on the part of her lodger. "What do you want? I don't know you. It can't be. I can't believe it," she said and positively

refused to hand over Pavel's property to the German when he came for it. "My Caroline Ivanovna *will,* I *will,* the Herr student *will.* You cannot refuse. If you won't give me the things, *meine Frau,* I go for the *Polizei,*" said the German and actually started off for the police. But the widow thought it best to submit to her fate and give up the things. She did, however, write a very long letter to Pavel which she sent to him by her maid. I have no idea what the contents of this letter were, for Pavel Beshmetev tore it up without reading it and threw the bits into the stove.

In his new lodgings, Pavel's life was just as monotonous and still more solitary. The landlord and his wife left him alone. The midwife was scarcely ever at home, and the honest Teuton devoted his days to an innocent and beloved occupation: he wrote out pages and pages in copper-plate, cherishing the ambition of one day becoming a teacher of calligraphy. Soon Pavel found a new occupation. He began sitting for hours at the window, his eyes fixed on the porch of the house opposite, from which there often emerged a young girl accompanied by an elderly lady, both of whom then got into a two-horse sleigh, drove off and returned later on. On warm days the girl would come out with a lady, or sometimes with a gentleman in a fur coat, and then she wore a warm silk cloak. And, dear God, how beautiful Pavel thought his neighbour! What a divine figure she had. And her eyes! Even at that distance he could see that she had beautiful black eyes. Pavel's life seemed to become richer. Every day he waked up with the hope of seeing his neighbour, and in fact he did see her every day. He soon came to know the hour at which she came out, and how long she stayed out. He knew the days on which she drove out at about twelve and came back quite late. On saints' days the two ladies came out at about eleven and were home by twelve. Pavel guessed that they went to mass and soon discovered that they went to a church in the neighbouring parish. He went there himself, saw her,

saw her close to, and every Sunday, every saint's day began attending this church. From this time he almost stopped studying and gave himself up completely to his dreams. He was longing for the girl to notice him, but this he never attained.

By the end of the first week of Lent the house opposite was deserted. Neither the girl, nor the lady, nor the gentleman in the fur coat were to be seen. They had gone away. It would be hard to describe the loneliness and grief which overcame Pavel. He even shed tears on the quiet, but soon began working frenziedly and came out second in the lists. The professor for whom he wrote his candidate's thesis advised him to sit for his Master of Arts. This was exceedingly flattering to the vanity of my hero and he decided to start working at once. But it was decreed to be otherwise.

One day Pavel received a letter from his aunt informing him that his father had died and his mother had had a stroke, and imploring him to come home as soon as possible. This grieved Pavel very much and he left at once, with the firm determination, however, of returning to Moscow. We have seen the sad circumstances discovered by Pavel Beshmetev when he got home. We have seen how his relatives took his decision to go back to Moscow. His mother had wept, his aunt had scolded. Later we saw how Pavel almost gave up his intentions, tearing up his papers, preparing to burn his books and then putting them back in their place in the hope that in time his mother would recover and let him go. But the old woman never recovered. My hero vacillated continually between a firm determination to leave and a decision to remain, his secret dream of a professorship came back to him, and he remembered his beloved studies and hopes of fame. Pavel was the prey of grief and disgust. "I will go, I will certainly go!" he would tell himself but invariably put off the hour of his departure indefinitely. He could not imagine

without horror the moment when his mother, taking leave of him, would, perhaps, not survive the blow and die in his arms. At the same time, since he was by no means confident of his own powers, he was far from convinced that he would be able to attain his aim, a professorship–at any rate this aim was still very distant. Naturally in such a situation Pavel could not be at peace. He was the prey of intolerable longings, grief and tedium. It was almost impossible for him to study, for he was always being called to his mother's bedside, or to receive a visit from his aunt or his sister, and, indeed, he was not over-inclined to work himself. When alone he would usually throw himself on his bed and begin thinking of God knows what, his heart devoured by grief and longing. His sister's domestic life was another source of disquietude to him. He considered Masurov a loathsome creature and his wife a martyr, her sorrows augmented by the threat of a very real evil–poverty. Lizaveta Vasilyevna herself never again said a word to her brother about her domestic troubles, seemed to be quite calm, and was very affectionate to Pavel. They spent whole days together. Pavel became more and more intimate with his sister, and grew frank and communicative with her, actually confiding his dream to her. Women as is well known are extremely ingenious. Lizaveta Vasilyevna considered that her brother could study without going to Moscow and that if he needed books he could send for them. Pavel found this idea a just one and made up his mind as soon as he got his next contributions from his serfs to lay out two hundred rubles or so on books and begin studying. Consoled by this decision, he nevertheless continued to spend whole days at his sister's side.

Whether by chance or purposely their talk almost invariably turned on the subject of love. Lizaveta Vasilyevna was much more experienced than her brother in this respect. She had known love in its most refined sensations. As we have already heard she had known the sufferings

and bliss of one who loves. Pavel listened joyfully and not without agitation to his sister's words. It was his first intimacy with a woman, his first insight into a woman's heart.

"Where did you learn all this, Sister?" he once asked, after listening to his sister's lively tale of a chance meeting between a young girl and the man she loved.

"I have read many novels," she replied.

Pavel shook his head doubtfully.

"A woman of twenty knows a great deal, has felt much," continued Lizaveta Vasilyevna.

"And has experienced much?" hazarded Pavel.

"That, too, perhaps," replied Lizaveta Vasilyevna.

The result of such conversations was that Pavel, after leaving his sister and lying down on his bed, would almost unconsciously begin thinking about women. His Moscow neighbour was recalled in the utmost detail. "What a lovely thing a woman is!" he thought. "What bliss to love a beautiful woman!" His idle imagination filled up the gaps in his sister's recitals. Later, in conversation with her, he touched lightly on his love for his neighbour in Moscow, whom he said he remembered as distinctly as if he had only seen her the day before.

V

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING

Lizaveta Vasilyevna was obliged to go to the country for a whole month. Pavel felt bored and melancholy. He tried to work but alas, things were not as they had been before with him. The formulae of the celestial mechanics seemed to have become obscure and incomprehensible, Virey's pamphlet was dull and fatiguing. "I can't go on!" he exclaimed, turning from his book, after which he usually flung himself on his bed and gave himself up to thought of the fairer section of the human race.

After a fortnight of tedium, Pavel took it into his head to go and see his aunt. Perepetuya Petrovna was standing in front of her mirror at the moment of his arrival, trying on a sort of mantilla made according to her unaided imagination.

"So you've come at last, Sir," she said, when she saw her nephew. "Well–how's Mama?"

"Just the same," replied Pavel.

"Palashka," said Perepetuya Petrovna, shaking out the skirts of her silk dress. "My petticoat still shows."

"No, no, Ma'am, it's all right."

" 'All right,' stupid idiot! Does my petticoat show, Pavel, or does it not?"

"I can't see anything."

"Bend lower, Sir, and have a good look. I don't want to go out looking all anyhow."

"I can't see anything."

"You can't even do that properly. And call yourself a young man! I wonder why my skin's so bad today. A kind of nasty redness. Palashka! Hand me my eau-de-Cologne, I'll rub my skin with it. And you do, too, Pavel!"

"Me, Auntie? What for?"

"Now, now, Sir! Rub your face, and we'll go out together."

"Where to?"

"To Feoktista Savvishna. Surely you don't think I'd take you anywhere disreputable."

"But, Auntie–I don't know her."

"What nonsense! What am I for? *I* know her, and that's quite enough. No nonsense, get ready! We'll go together, you can send your carriage back. Palashka, tell them to send his carriage back."

"But, Auntie. . . ."

"Nonsense, Sir, nonsense!" vociferated Perepetuya Petrovna.

Resist as he might, in the course of a few minutes my hero was rubbed with eau-de-Cologne by the hand of Perepetuya Petrovna herself, and taken on a visit. He found himself in the porch of Feoktista Savvishna before he had quite recovered from his astonishment. Perepetuya Petrovna, mounting the wooden staircase, lit by a single lamp, leaned on her nephew's arm both for support and to cut off all possibilities of retreat for Pavel, who had once before slipped away from her at the last moment. In the entry there were half a dozen fur coats, three footmen and a strong smell of grease. In the reception-room.... But I must make a digression here to say a few words about the mistress of the house and her guests. Feoktista Savvishna no more belonged to the highest social circles in the gubernia than did Perepetuya Petrovna, and had only one friendly haven in that circle—the home of the Kurayevs. For the rest her acquaintances were drawn from the class of obscure officials. Just now her guests included a certain Ivan Ivanych, a landed proprietor who lent money at interest, the district attorney, a most worthy man, but unfortunately given to bouts of drinking several times a year, a teacher who aspired to an inspectorship, and a few others. All these gentlemen had brought their wives with them, and some even their sisters-in-law. Feoktista Savvishna usually tried to brighten up her evening parties by inviting her only friends from the highest circles—the Kurayevs. Vladimir Andreich himself never came, but since he sometimes borrowed money through the agency of Feoktista Savvishna, he sent his wife and daughters. The brunette declared that she was always terribly bored at these dreary parties. She would scornfully refuse all refreshments, complaining of the heat and stuffiness and continually urging her mother to leave. But Marya Ivanovna told her that Vladimir Andreich knew when to send the carriage, and, in the simplicity of her heart, went on playing preference with the school-teacher and Ivan Ivanych, as delighted as if her

partners were people of the greatest importance. As for the blonde, she relieved the tedium by laughing, now at Ivan Ivanych's red nose, now at the lawyer's clumsy gait, and the wart so inappropriately situated under his left eye, now ... in a word, no one was spared. Feoktista Savvishna's guests behaved with the utmost respect towards these personages from the highest circles, while the hostess herself showered attentions upon them, though almost everyone knew very well that these personages were by no means solid, or, as many said, there was more show than substance about them, in other words, they were in extremely straitened circumstances. But their elegant demeanour? Ah, their elegant demeanour won them involuntary respect!

The hostess came into the salon to greet Perepetuya Petrovna and Pavel.

"Allow me to introduce my nephew," said Perepetuya Petrovna, as she embraced her friend.

"Charmed!" replied Feoktista Savvishna, bowing affectedly to Pavel and regarding him with a certain astonishment. She had not expected him to be at all like that. "Come in, Perepetuya Petrovna," she continued, indicating the drawing-room. "Pavel Vasilich, be so kind."

But Pavel would not be kind, and did not proceed to the drawing-room. Instead, after standing where he was for a moment or two, he seated himself in the neighbourhood of a gentleman in a brown coat, who seemed also to be no ladies' man, for he sat in the salon quite alone. The brunette and the blonde felt very bored and hot in the drawing-room, which really was extremely stuffy. The two girls went arm in arm into the salon. They cast fleeting glances from Pavel to his neighbour, and exchanged mocking looks. Pavel had noticed them, too, and an extraordinary change took place in his appearance. He shook all over, as if he had touched a Leyden jar, turned first pale then red, looked rather strangely at the gentleman in the

brown coat, and began following the girls with his eyes as they paced backwards and forwards. In the brunette my hero had recognized his Moscow neighbour. The girls themselves did not look either at Pavel or his neighbour again, but began talking loudly about a recent fancy dress ball, speaking French as they always did, to put Feoktista Savvishna's ignorant guests to shame. Very soon the hostess came into the room and began imploring Julie Vladimirovna (the brunette) to sing. The latter refused.

"You have no idea what an angelic voice she has," Feoktista Savvishna said, turning to Pavel and the gentleman in the brown coat.

The brown coat rose, coughed, and said nothing. His face seemed to say: "I haven't, and I don't care!" But Pavel behaved still more strangely, neither rising to his feet nor answering his hostess.

"Who's that?" whispered the blonde.

"Beshmetev," replied Feoktista Savvishna.

The blonde compressed her lips and bent her head slightly.

"Julie Vladimirovna," continued Feoktista Savvishna, who seemed to have a craving for music. "Take pity on us, do not refuse us this pleasure."

Julie Vladimirovna did take pity on them, and sat down at the piano looking thoroughly disagreeable. The moment she struck the first chord all the guests, those playing cards and those not playing, poured into the salon, and by the time the singer had got to the second verse of *"Ah, my poor bough!"* many were sunk in pleasing melancholy.

"That song always makes me cry," said Marya Ivanovna, who seemed deeply moved. "It has so much soul, you know!"

"Yes," said Ivan Ivanych. "It's a charming song and Julie Vladimirovna sings beautifully."

"She has a nice voice," agreed Julie's mother.

All this time Pavel had been sitting in the same place

without moving. The blonde very much wanted to speak to him, owing to her laudable tendency to befriend the unfortunate.

"Do you like music?" she asked him.

"I know nothing about it," answered Pavel.

"Don't you play any instrument yourself?"

"No, I don't."

"And how do you like my sister's voice?"

To this question Pavel, displaying obvious embarrassment, made no reply.

"How funny he is!" said the blonde to herself. "I must try to make him talk. Perhaps he'll say something ridiculous."

With this intention she sat down beside Pavel.

"Do you ever go to the assembly?" she asked.

"No."

"Why not?"

"I don't like it."

"And why don't you like it?"

Just then the brunette came up to her sister.

"Fancy, *ma soeur*!" said the blonde. "Monsieur doesn't like the assembly."

Julie replied to her sister with a smile and taking her hand led her away from Pavel.

The carriage came for the Kurayevs soon after eleven and they took their leave, despite their hostess's urgent entreaties to stay for a snack. Pavel and his aunt left after supper. When he got back to his room he sat wrapt in profound thought for a quarter of an hour, and then started writing a letter to his sister.

"Liza, my dear," he wrote. "You can have no idea what happened to me today. I went to see our aunt. She was going out and made me go with her. I didn't want to, of course. But she shouted and scolded, and almost forced me to get into her sleigh and go with her to Feoktista Savvishna, and there I met—who do you think?

–her, the one I saw in Moscow. I still can't collect my wits. My aunt says she lives here, her name is Kurayeva. Good God, how pretty she has become! Her features seem to be more regular than before. And her hands, Liza! When she played she wasn't a woman, but a Greek statue, exactly like a statue."

Here Pavel broke off and lay down on his bed. (The local music teacher, by the way, was of quite another opinion. He always scolded the brunette for her utter inability to sit properly at the piano, owing to her affectations.) After lying down for a few minutes, Pavel got up and went on with the letter:

"I am undoubtedly in love. Something strange and incomprehensible has come over me. God knows what I would give for her to love me! I would give up everything for that!"

Here he again stopped, again lay down on his bed, and, once more getting up, added:

"Do come soon, Liza, for God's sake! I'm dying of boredom without you. I have such a lot to discuss with you. What are you doing there? Come! I remain your loving brother, who is madly in love."

Having thus brought his epistle to a conclusion he sealed it and went to bed, but lay awake a long time, tossing from side to side. When he got up the next morning he unsealed the letter, read it through several times and, apparently changing his mind, tore it up in tiny pieces, only to write another immediately:

"Dear Liza, what are you doing in the country? Come quick! I'm very bored. Mama is the same as ever, my aunt is always scolding. I haven't seen your husband, but I went to see the children. They're quite well, I'm glad to say. Come! I have a lot to talk to you about.

"Your brother."

Pavel dispatched the letter and sat down to read, but after a quarter of an hour he cast the book from him and flung himself face down on his bed, where he remained motionless almost the whole day.

VI

A VISIT TO THE ASSEMBLY AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

For want of anything better to do, Pavel gave himself up to thoughts of a certain brunette, whom he felt a passionate desire to see again. He discovered where her house was and would pace up and down for two hours in its neighbourhood, in the hope that, as in Moscow, she would come out for a walk, or at least go out for a drive. He went to the theatre once or twice, but without success. Lizaveta Vasilyevna came back, but it was not till a week later, and then very lightly, that in his conversations with her Pavel touched upon his meeting with the beauteous damsel of Moscow. Lizaveta Vasilyevna, however, guessed that her brother was in love in good earnest and was delighted. In accordance with the well-known law that sisters are always longing to marry off their brothers, the idea of a marriage between Pavel and Julie Kurayeva was instantly formed in her mind. She spoke to him about it, and though it appeared to my hero both extraordinary and impossible to bring about, he raised no objections. He was overwhelmed by a kind of joyous awe whenever he tried to imagine that this girl, who was so beautiful and was now so far from him, might not only love him, but give herself up to him wholly, belong to him body and soul—above all, soul ... how joyful, how awe-inspiring was the thought! But Pavel kept all these thoughts to himself, saying to his sister: "Of course it's not a bad idea.... But how's it to be done?" Ever since the thought of marriage had entered the mind of my hero he had been seized by a kind of agitation, a

constant stirring of the pulses. There was an urgency in his dreams now, and the desire to see Julie again grew ever stronger, so that very soon he went to his sister of his own accord and asked her to accompany him to the assembly, where he hoped to meet the Kurayevs. Lizaveta Vasilyevna consented joyfully, for she was anxious to see this Julie. But now a fresh difficulty arose. Pavel was terrified at the thought of appearing at the assembly and was continually on the point of backing out. The very thought of entering a hall full of strangers made his blood turn cold. What was he to do there? How ought he to behave? With whom must he talk? What could he talk about? Marvel not, oh, worldly reader, at these misgivings of my hero! You grew up in utterly different circumstances. Perhaps, like Yevgeny Onegin, you emerged from beneath the ferule of some insinuating French tutor with exquisite manners, and have, probably, been a haunter of society and balls since you were seventeen. But Pavel had only been to a ball once in his whole life, when his mother had taken him to one as a child, and to this day had been unable to forget the confusion and embarrassment he had felt in the brilliantly lit hall. On the day of the assembly he spent much time over his toilet, gazed long at himself in the mirror, washed several times, waved his hair himself and then, dissatisfied with the result, had recourse to the services of the barber, and even then felt dissatisfied. He actually gave up the idea of going, especially since the maid had laundered his shirt-front atrociously, causing Pavel to fly into a rage, a thing he seldom did. But he soon changed his mind again and by eight o'clock was dressed in a black swallow-tailed coat and a coloured waistcoat. The coat, though made from the best cloth, did not sit well on him. When Pavel arrived at his sister's house he found her still in her dressing-gown, but her hair was already arranged for the ball. Pavel's agitation showed itself clearly in

his face. After greeting his sister he took to pacing uneasily up and down the room.

"What's worrying you, Paul?" asked his sister.

"Nothing."

"But I can see you're upset."

"No, I'm not. I just don't feel like going."

"But it was you who asked me to go."

"I know. But you see–"

"I don't see anything."

"I don't feel quite well."

"Nonsense, Paul. What makes you so nervous?"

Pavel said nothing.

"Well, aren't we going, then?" asked Lizaveta Vasilyevna, after a moment's pause.

"I don't know," said Pavel.

"What makes you so shy? What's the matter?"

"I'm not shy."

"What is it then? What makes you afraid of people?"

"I'm not afraid, but I don't like society. I feel awkward with people, somehow. They all look at you. You have to talk and I simply don't know what to talk about, I can think of nothing but hollow phrases or thoughts that are much too serious, never anything suitable for polite conversation."

Lizaveta Vasilyevna shook her head.

"Strange man! Anyone else in your place would have got to know the Kurayevs in Moscow."

"I like that! How on earth was I to get acquainted with them?"

"Simply by calling on them. That's all."

"How on earth could I have done that?"

"How do other people get acquainted?"

"I don't know. They're, probably, invited."

"Not a bit of it! They just call."

"I should consider that impertinence."

"No impertinence in it."

"But it *would* be impertinence! I just call and introduce myself, like a bolt from the blue. As if I considered myself so interesting!"

"Every young man is interesting where there are daughters, because he might be a suitor. But it wasn't that, Paul. You're just not enough in love."

"I am, Liza."

"Then what's the matter?"

"Nothing.... But you're wrong."

With these words Pavel suddenly blushed.

Brother and sister were silent.

"Now look here, Paul," began Lizaveta Vasilyevna. "We'll go to the assembly. You can have another look at her, and I'll have a look and then...."

"And then what?"

"Then we'll find out about them, how things are ... and then you'll go and call on them once or twice...."

"Not for the world!"

"Oh, nonsense! You'll call, and I'll call, and the next thing we'll be hearing: 'Here come Pavel Vasilich and his wife!' See if we don't!"

"No, Sister, it's impossible. It's sheer guesswork on your part."

"We'll see. Well? Do you intend to go? Shall I get dressed?" jested Lizaveta Vasilyevna, rising from her seat.

"Do," replied Pavel in strange accents.

Lizaveta Vasilyevna went out of the room and Pavel gave himself up to his reflections. Half an hour later she came back, fully dressed. Despite his preoccupation Pavel almost cried out, so beautiful was she with her slender, tightly laced figure, her soft white arms and neck bare, her intelligent, expressive countenance shaded by luxuriant pitch-black curls. Pavel could not help glancing at the mirror, and dear God, how ugly, how undistinguished his own appearance seemed to him! The nearer they got to the assembly rooms, the greater grew his uneasiness; his heart

sank, but though several times he felt tempted to ask his sister to turn back, he followed her in silence.

Pavel entered the ball-room in a fever. There was a strange expression on his pale countenance. Madame Masurova immediately became the centre of attention.

"Lizaveta Vasilyevna! At last you show yourself!" cried a fat, respectable lady, who came up and pressed her hand. "Who's that with you?" she continued, catching sight of Pavel. "Your husband?"

"No, my brother," replied Lizaveta Vasilyevna and glanced at Pavel, intending to introduce him to the respectable lady. But Pavel met his sister's glance very gravely and did not budge. Lizaveta Vasilyevna was quickly surrounded by old friends, some of whom had known she was in town, while others emitted sounds of astonishment and delight. *"Mon dieu! Est-ce bien vous?" "C'est vous, madame?"* the words: *"Ma bonne Lise," "Ma chère,"* and even *"Lisette"* could be heard, but no one noticed or greeted Pavel. He felt, as he had anticipated, extremely awkward. He did not know what to do with his hands, his feet, and his hat, in fact, he did not know how to behave with propriety. At that time Pavel had not learned anything about the manners of a young man. He did not know how to fit his hand gracefully into his waistcoat, how to hold his hat in a picturesque manner, slightly to one side, how to thrust his left foot just a little before him, still less could he smile mockingly or cast an indifferent glance at those around him. The expression of his face was at once excessively mournful and unnecessarily severe. After standing for a few moments in the pose of a tragic actor who has forgotten his lines, he saw fit to sit down. It should here be noted that Pavel's appearance was not so bad. Apart from certain portly individuals who immediately sat down to preference or whist, there were several slender young men whose features and tailcoats were infinitely inferior to Pavel's. Some of these, like him, seated themselves at a dis-

tance, but others were already dancing. There were, of course, some who were greatly superior to him. Among these latter was a tall gentleman of about thirty-five, standing behind a pillar. He was dressed all in black, from his ample English-style coat, to his carelessly knotted satin tie. His sallow face, with its deeply graven lines and great black moustache, wore the most modish expression, an expression of disillusion, which very few faces knew how to assume at that time. His brown eyes travelled languidly over the French quadrille being formed a short distance away. Many of the ladies present obviously took a great interest in this tall gentleman. Some only looked at him, others gave him a friendly nod, and one young lady, who had purposely sent her partner, a loose-limbed youth, all round the hall with her chair, finally made him place it in front of the pillar where the dandy was standing, and actually sat down next to the tall gentleman. The latter, however, paid not the slightest attention to her but stood there indolently stroking his long moustache. The young lady turned her head towards him several times, raising her great grey eyes to his face.

"Monsieur Bakhtiarov," she said at last, unable to contain her impatience.

The dandy regarded her languidly.

"Look," continued the lady, indicating Pavel with a nod of her head. "Why is that gentleman so angry?"

"I can't see at a distance."

"It isn't far at all, he's sitting at the window over there."

"I don't see."

"Come now. Just look."

"I assure you I see nothing."

Somewhat offended, the lady turned away.

"You're out of humour today," she said.

"As usual."

"Oh, but do just look at that angry gentleman."

Bakhtiarov smiled sardonically.

"What an odd desire," he said and, reluctantly lifting a long-handled monocle to his eye, he glanced towards Pavel. The expression of indifference immediately vanished from his face, and he actually flushed. "What a likeness!" he said, as if to himself.

"To whom?" asked the lady.

Bakhtiarov did not answer.

"What likeness?" repeated the lady.

"To you," replied Bakhtiarov.

The lady shrugged her shoulders and pouted.

"You've forgotten, it's your turn to begin," said Bakhtiarov after a short silence.

The lady entered the first figure, but could not find her place in the chain. In the meantime Bakhtiarov happened to glance at the place where Lizaveta Vasilyevna was dancing and again his expression altered. When his neighbour came back to her seat, he moved in front of the pillar and began a gay conversation with her.

"You seem to be hysterical today," she said.

"Why do you say that?"

"It looks like it. You are melancholy, and exaggeratedly gay in turns. *I* used to be like that."

"It's not what you think," said Bakhtiarov. "Fate, you know, occasionally bestows upon a man in his tedious everyday life a sudden, unexpected—what shall I call it?—pleasure, or rather joy. . . ."

"Really?" interrupted the lady. "And is this what has happened to you?"

"To a certain extent."

"My congratulations. So it means you're happy."

"To a certain extent."

"May one know the cause?"

"Impossible."

"But why?"

"Because you'd tell everybody."

"Word of honour I won't tell a soul."

"Well then. I have just seen an old friend."

The lady shook her head doubtfully, endeavouring to guess by the direction of Bakhtiarov's glance whom he was looking at.

"Come now—it's a lady-friend, isn't it?" she suggested.

"I have no lady-friends."

"Why not?"

"I haven't loved a woman for ages."

"And M., and K., and D.? And the lady in spectacles?"

"It was they who loved me, not I them."

"Look here, it's base to speak of women in that way."

"And it's still baser to gossip about your friends."

"Who does that?"

"You."

"Why, for heaven's sake! Everybody knows it. You yourself admitted it just now."

"I was suiting myself to your tone."

"What d'you mean? What tone?"

"Gossiping."

"That's too much," cried the lady, deeply offended, and she rose from her place.

At that moment the quadrille came to an end. Bakhtiarov strode to the other end of the hall. Lizaveta Vasilyevna was standing there engaged in conversation with a bald gentleman. Bakhtiarov approached her and stood waiting respectfully for some minutes.

"*Je vous salue, madame,*" he said at last in a low voice.

Lizaveta Vasilyevna started and turned. She blushed hotly, replying with a silent bow. Bakhtiarov, apparently, found nothing to say either, merely asking her to dance the next quadrille with him. Lizaveta Vasilyevna hesitated.

"Very well," she said after a moment's thought. They stood there a little longer, till at last Lizaveta Vasilyevna bethought herself and went to her brother.

"Which is she, Paul?" she asked, unable to conceal her agitation.

"She's not here," replied Paul, who was still sitting in his former attitude.

"Let's walk up and down," she said, taking his arm.

"I won't do that."

"Pavel, for God's sake! I need you."

"I can't, Sister."

"Well, at least sit beside me between the figures. Please, Paul!"

"Very well."

Lizaveta Vasilyevna immediately seized upon a red-haired lady and began walking about the hall with her. Bakhtiarov seemed to be longing to approach her again but did not come near, only following her with his eyes. The orchestra gave the signal. When Lizaveta Vasilyevna sat down beside her partner her agitation was all too apparent. Her breast heaved, her hands trembled, her eyes sought out her brother. But Pavel sat on wrapt in thought, unseeing.

This scene did not escape the notice of the young lady Bakhtiarov had offended. She watched him rise and approach Lizaveta Vasilyevna, noted their mutual confusion and remembering Bakhtiarov's words about his unexpected happiness immediately put two and two together.

"I have infuriated Bakhtiarov!" she said, going up to the lady in spectacles.

"He's always angry."

"I have discovered the secret in his heart."

"Since when has he had a heart?"

"Only see," said the young lady, "the tigerish way he is watching the lady in the brown dress!"

The pale lady in spectacles turned still paler.

"It's an old affair with them. She was still a girl. . . ."

"I've guessed," interrupted the young lady just as she was called away by the beginning of the French quadrille.

"Look how happy Bakhtiarov is!" she remarked to her partner, a very young man with an expression of extraordinary determination.

"Quite so," he corroborated. "He's even forgotten to smile sourly."

The young man, who was in a permanent state of annoyance with Bakhtiarov because the latter's evening clothes were always in the latest fashion, went to the refreshment-room and, throwing himself energetically on a sofa, said to the officer-friend who accompanied him:

"Those gentlemen simply don't know how to behave."

"Who d'you mean?" asked his friend, inhaling the Zhukov tobacco lustily.

"The morose Bakhtiarov has been making up to his partner like an Arcadian shepherd all through the quadrille."

"He was dancing with Lizaveta Vasilyevna Masurova," replied the officer, who had a remarkable talent for knowing the names and surnames of all ladies, even those with whom he was not acquainted.

This officer went back to the ball-room and took up his station beside another friend of his, a fellow-officer. This friend, catching sight of Lizaveta Vasilyevna who happened to be passing, remarked :

"Look what shoulders, Brother!"

"No good, Brother–the place is filled!"

"By whom?"

"By Bakhtiarov."

"In that case, of course––"

As a matter of fact Bakhtiarov really was behaving rather strangely, and not at all as he had been behaving up to now. The expression of cold indifference with which he usually treated the ladies of his acquaintance in the town, with whom it was whispered he was nevertheless extremely successful, had vanished from his face. All through the first figure he maintained a respectful silence. Lizaveta Va-

silyevna kept glancing at her brother without speaking. Halfway through the quadrille Pavel, looking towards his sister's place and observing that she was dancing with Bakhtiarov, rose immediately and approaching the dancers with a rapid step, seated himself not far from them. At that very moment Bakhtiarov broke the silence.

"I haven't yet recovered from the shock," he began. "It was so unexpected to see you, I was so astonished."

"We haven't met for four years," said Lizaveta Vasilyevna.

Bakhtiarov showed a certain embarrassment.

"Is your husband here?" he asked.

"No, he didn't come. I came with my brother."

"Good heavens, what a long time it is since I saw you last!" resumed Bakhtiarov in his former tone.

Lizaveta Vasilyevna went to dance her solo out of her turn.

"You are unjust to me," he continued, warming up to the subject. "Nay, you were even cruel."

"Take my fan, Paul," said Lizaveta Vasilyevna, turning towards Pavel.

"Is that your brother?"

"Yes."

And again the dance carried her away from him.

Bakhtiarov tweaked his moustache in his vexation.

"Will you allow me to call on you?" he asked, taking advantage of the final figure to lead Lizaveta Vasilyevna away from her brother.

The young woman hesitated.

"That depends on yourself," she replied.

The quadrille came to an end.

"Let'us go, Liza," said Pavel softly.

"Very well," replied the young woman.

"Accordez moi la mazurka?"

"Pardon, monsieur, je pars."

"*Mais....*"

"*Allons*, Paul...."

Lizaveta Vasilyevna and her brother left the assembly rooms.

Bakhtiarov, out of humour, again stationed himself at his pillar.

"No doubt you are bored now you no longer see a certain person," said the pale lady in spectacles, passing by arm in arm with the first young lady.

"Not nearly so much as by another person whom I do see," replied Bakhtiarov.

After a short time he went to the billiard-room and seated himself amongst the spectators on a sofa. He was evidently profoundly bored. There were two players at the table. One appeared to be a grave, indeed an indignant-looking individual, the other—the other was our old acquaintance Masurov.

The grave gentleman missed his stroke.

"That's not the way we do it," said Masurov, bending agilely over the edge of the billiard-table and sticking out his elbows as he took aim. "Ha, ha!" he cried, skilfully sending the yellow into the middle pocket.

"There's a counter-stroke for you, eh?" he continued, addressing the spectators.

"Fine player!" said a lean gentleman known in the town as Broomstick, turning to Bakhtiarov.

"What?" asked Bakhtiarov.

"I say Mikhailo Nikolaich is a fine player."

"Which Mikhailo Nikolaich?"

"Masurov."

"Is that Masurov?"

"Masurov—a fine player."

Bakhtiarov rose immediately from his place and approached the players.

"What d'you think of that?" said Masurov, noticing him at his side.

"Splendid!" replied Bakhtiarov.

"Taking such a long time to aim, and boasting you've played with Turya . . . you'll miss, I tell you!" cried Masurov just as his partner was beginning to take aim.

"Stop your chatter," said the latter, lifting his cue in vexation.

"I didn't say anything. Why should I?"

"Didn't say anything! Booming in my ear like a bell!" grumbled the other, once more beginning to take aim.

"Bell yourself! There you are—I said so!" he exclaimed, breaking out into peals of laughter.

His partner really had missed.

"It's impossible to play with you," he said, putting up his cue.

"Now you're cross! Never mind! We'll play like this: Hi, marker! Count! Twelve and again twelve. Allow me to congratulate you, the game's over."

"That'll do," said his partner, flinging a ten-ruble note on the cloth.

"Let's go on. What's ten rubles?"

"I'm not going to play, you keep talking when I'm trying to take aim."

"I won't do it any more, I swear I won't! I won't say a word."

"I've had enough!" said the other shortly, and turned away.

"What a chap!" Masurov called after him. "Lost ten rubles and takes fright! For heaven's sake, I used to lose up to ten thousand in a single evening, and yet I didn't stop playing!"

"Won't you play with me?" said Bakhtiarov.

"Delighted!" replied Masurov, cheering up. "You're in the Hussars, aren't you?"

"Yes, I am."

They began playing. Masurov was in raptures. Somehow it happened each time that he finished a game with a

single stroke, or the balls rolled in such a way that Bakhtiarov only had the white at his disposal.

"What's the matter with you?" the spectators asked Bakhtiarov.

"He plays so well," replied that gentleman, in apparent annoyance.

"No, no, it's no good playing with me on equal terms!" said Masurov. "Take ten points handicap."

"I lose because we're playing so low. Let's stake fifty rubles!"

"Oh, no! That's impossible. It would mean simply robbing you. Let's play for a bottle of wine!"

"Very well."

Bakhtiarov lost this time, too.

"That'll do," said Masurov. "You oughtn't to play with me, you know. Let's have a drink!"

They sat down at a table at the other end of the room.

"I'm so glad to have met you," said Mikhailo Nikolaich extending his hand to Bakhtiarov.

"The pleasure is mutual," replied Bakhtiarov, pressing Masurov's hand.

"My name is Masurov."

"And I am Bakhtiarov."

"Delighted!"

"You play very well."

"You should have met me before! You'll hardly believe it, but no one in the regiment wanted to play with me! A dog of a Jew once tried a trick at the Malorossiya Fair—set up a table with no sides. What d'you think of that?"

"Impossible."

"I give you my word of honour. Well now.... How on earth were we to play? This one came forward, and another. There were some good players. Everybody had a look. But nobody wanted to risk it. Well, thinks I.... 'Hi, pig's-ear!' I said to the Jew. 'When is your billiard-room empty?' 'From four a.m. till eight in the morning, Your Hon-

our.' Good. I go there at four in the morning, start rolling the balls, stay there all night, all by myself. But by daylight I beat the dog himself twice. Then some other fellows took me on. There were nine or ten of them—cavalry officers. Knocked them all into a cocked hat. One official even lost his unmentionables to me, if you'll excuse the expression. You never saw anything so comical!"

"But how could you play? I don't understand," said Bakhtiarov, who had been following this narrative attentively.

"Quite simple. There weren't any rebounds. You only had to strike the balls gently, so that they shouldn't fall on to the floor. Your health, Monsieur—— Be so kind as to tell me your name and patronymic."

"Alexander Sergeich."

"Your health, Alexander Sergeich."

They touched glasses and drank.

"I have had the pleasure of dancing with your wife this evening."

"Really? D'you mean to say she's here?"

"She was here. I see you didn't know."

"I certainly did not. I haven't been home the whole day. Now I remember, she said something about it."

"I used to know her before she married."

"She's a nice woman, isn't she?"

"Divine!"

"Deuce take it, if she wasn't my wife I believe I would flirt with her myself."

"Are you fond of that sort of thing?"

"I should say I am! Let's have another bottle and see if we can find some pretty women here."

"With pleasure!"

"The last time I was at the assembly I saw a lady. Deuce take it, she had eyes that fairly sizzled."

The new friends went into the ball-room arm in arm but Masurov soon jerked himself away from Bakhtiarov. He

was as much at home at the assembly as in his own house, and felt even more at ease there than the polished and worldly Bakhtiarov. He shook hands with almost all the men, bowed to the ladies, even whispering in the ears of some. And Bakhtiarov only discovered him a quarter of an hour later waiting with his partner for their turn in the mazurka. Catching sight of his friend, Masurov pointed to his own eyes and winked in the direction of the lady. Her eyes really were remarkable and very black. They bulged violently as if trying to spring out of their sockets. Bakhtiarov almost laughed and, not wishing to be outstripped by his friend in the choice of a lady, searched till he found a young lady whose eyes were no less remarkable, though in quite a different way, being deep-set. And try as their owner might to stretch her pinkish lids, the eyes seemed to hide as if anxious to avoid showing themselves. Masurov laughed heartily at the sight of Bakhtiarov and his lady, who were seated not far away.

"Bravo, Alexander Sergeich! What is tightly closed on your side is wide open on mine."

The friends both played the fool in the mazurka. They brought their ladies back to their places with a violent spin, went through their *pas* in the most conspicuous manner, or merely paced up and down exchanging the most absurd remarks, invented on the spur of the moment. There was a certain difference in their ways of treating their partner. Bakhtiarov was taciturn, even yawning now and then, whereas Masurov chattered incessantly. He told his lady that he adored women's eyes, that he could never resist a woman's glance, that he had known a certain Jewess, and ... here he related such a story about the Jewess that the lady did not know whether to be angry or to laugh. In the intervals of conversation Masurov asked Bakhtiarov loudly if he knew the song: *"O! Gaze not on me, fiery eyes!"* and finished up by assuring his partner that he would never forget this mazurka, that it would be

engraved for ever on his heart. The lady turned her eyes on him without saying anything, and walked away.

Bakhtiarov and Masurov supped together, and drank another two bottles of champagne and soon Masurov was addressing his new friend quite simply as *mon cher.*

There were many who observed the intimacy between Bakhtiarov and Masurov, and not a few who guessed at its true significance. Most of these latter were ladies, who, as is well known, display the most extraordinary curiosity and inexpressible perspicacity in such cases. In a very short time everyone was saying that the haughty Bakhtiarov was making up to Masurov, adapting himself to the latter's vulgarity as a cover for his intrigue with his wife. When these rumours reached the Kurayevs, the brunette was said to have gone to her room and stayed there all day, complaining of headache. Her maid declared that her young mistress had lain crying on her bed the whole time.

VII

OF THIS AND THAT

Pavel's life dragged on still more mournfully and monotonously after his unsuccessful visit to the assembly. He spent days on end in complete solitude. His sister he saw but seldom. Lizaveta Vasilyevna seemed to have changed, there was something strange about her and she treated her brother quite differently. After the ball at the assembly she was ill for several days, or gave herself out to be ill, and kept her bed. Bakhtiarov had called on the Masurovs the very next day. Mikhailo Nikolaich begged his wife to come out and play the hostess to his new friend, who, he said, as an old friend of her own, had seen her at the assembly and very much wished to improve the acquaintance. Lizaveta Vasilyevna found this visit disagreeable and told her husband in no uncertain terms that she was ill and could not appear.

"I don't know how it is, Liza, but you always seem to thwart my wishes. He isn't a bit like my other friends, you know. A most important man, he might even be of use to our children."

With these words Masurov went out of her bedroom. Both guest and host very soon seemed to have forgotten all about Lizaveta Vasilyevna. They sat down to boston and played till evening. When Bakhtiarov turned up again a day or two later, Lizaveta Vasilyevna asked her husband if this man was going to pester them for long.

"You can say what you will, my love!" almost shrieked Mikhailo Nikolaich. "Kill me if you like–but we shall play every day! He's the best and noblest partner I ever had."

"Why don't you go to him to play?"

"Impossible, absolutely impossible! The stoves are being repaired in every room. Otherwise it would be all the same to us."

"This is intolerable, Michel. A stranger in the house all day."

"Say no more, Liza. It can't be helped. Ask me anything else."

"But Michel––"

"My love, my angel, not another word, for God's sake!" cried Masurov and dashed out of the room.

The same scene was repeated on the fourth day. On the fifth Lizaveta Vasilyevna waked up paler than usual, her eyelids red and swollen. It was obvious that she had passed a restless night. Bakhtiarov arrived at noon and Mikhailo Nikolaich immediately sat down to cards with him. This time Lizaveta Vasilyevna did not send word that she was ill. She went into the drawing-room and bowed rather coldly to the visitor in answer to his expressions of regret as to her indisposition. Agitation was stamped all too clearly on Bakhtiarov's features and he frequently played the wrong cards, or quite forgot which card he had played.

Lizaveta Vasilyevna was outwardly perfectly calm. She sat working, she occupied herself with her children, leaving the room frequently, as if hardly aware of the presence of a stranger. But towards the end of the day she went back to bed, pleading a headache. The next few days were just the same. Pavel was a mute spectator of all this. He strongly suspected that Bakhtiarov was in love with his sister and that whether she loved him now or not, she must have once loved him dearly. He would have liked to speak to her about this, but Lizaveta Vasilyevna markedly avoided frank conversation and since the day of the assembly had even ceased speaking to her brother about his love affairs. When Pavel began thinking about his sister's relations with Bakhtiarov he was overcome by an inexplicable sadness. Unpleasant forebodings rose in his mind. His position in the Masurov house began to irk him. Bakhtiarov and Masurov took very little notice of him, his sister held aloof. So he stopped going. "I wonder why my sister has changed towards me!" Pavel asked himself over and over again. "Why doesn't she tell if she really does love that man? And is he worthy of her? He's a worldly fellow. I don't like him." Pavel forgave his sister for being in love, but considered the object she had chosen unworthy of her. Somehow or other these thoughts always made him sad and uneasy. "I wish it were not so," he always ended up by saying to himself. "And what can come of this love?" He was afraid to answer this question. The person who chiefly roused his anger was Mikhailo Nikolaich. "That empty fellow," he told himself, "will bring ruin on his whole family, he's capable of selling his own wife! He is base, worthless, dissipated.... Naturally my sister prefers Bakhtiarov, who, while he may be no less dissipated, at least, has some character." There were even moments when Pavel envied his sister and Bakhtiarov. They loved, they were loved, while he?... At this point the image of the brunette would rise unbidden in his mind, not the

cold brunette who had stayed away from the assembly, but another–a brunette who was kind and affectionate, friendly to himself. This one held out her hand to him, walked by his side. But the dream was always interrupted, either he was called to his mother, or his aunt or sister arrived and made him tell her how the old woman had been during the last two days, what she had been doing, and whether he thought her worse. Pavel answered all these questions in monosyllables. During these visits his aunt usually scolded Pavel for not getting himself a post in a government office, for not going to see her, ending up by asking him if he wasn't ashamed of being so cold to his mother who had always been his best friend.

One day, just at the beginning of Lent, Perepetuya Petrovna came to her sister's house. She was greatly agitated and, with a rapidity and carelessness quite foreign to her, flung off her mantle and went into the salon. Her face was covered with crimson blotches.

"Where's Pasha?" she asked.

"In his room," replied the chamber-maid.

Perepetuya Petrovna made her way to him.

"Good day, Pavel! Never mind, you can stay in your dressing-gown. Why is your room so dirty? The floor not washed, and look at the dust on the table! Haven't you got enough of those flibbertigibbets, Sir, those maids of yours? Shut the door, I want to speak to you."

Pavel closed the door. Perepetuya Petrovna seated herself in an armchair.

"How long is it since you saw your sister?"

"Two or three days."

"At her house?"

"No, Liza was here."

"And is it long since you were there?"

"I was there a week ago."

"Has she gone mad, d'you think?"

"Who?"

"Who? Your sister!"

Pavel gazed at his aunt in astonishment.

"I'm in such a state! But for the firmness of my character there's no saying what-- Who was there when you called?"

"Nobody."

"Now you're lying. Nobody! Bakhtiarov was there. He goes there every day and only goes home to bed. So there!"

It was only then that Pavel began to guess what the matter was.

"He's Mikhailo Nikolaich's friend," he said.

"Oh no, he isn't! He's more like his enemy. He's the enemy of our whole family. Good! So it's Mikhailo Nikolaich's fault. Lay all the blame on the husband. Husbands are always to blame. You don't understand a thing."

"There's nothing to understand."

"Oh, but there is! You're her brother."

"What is it you want me to understand?"

"I want you to understand that your sister is carrying on an intrigue."

"Auntie!"

"Auntie, indeed! You think it's pleasant for me to hear the whole town saying that she and Bakhtiarov are having an affair, and a beastly, evil affair!"

Pavel reddened furiously.

"It's a libel! Kindly don't say that in front of me, Auntie."

"But I will say it in front of you!-You've got to act!"

"There's nothing for me to do. It's simply the gossip of evil minds."

"Don't you dare say that! It was my good friends who told me, it's being talked about all over the place. People who are your elders and betters. They are sorry for me,

knowing my family feelings, and for poor Mikhailo Nikolaich. Those two are making him drink, inveigling him to gamble, they may drive him to his grave. That's what's being said everywhere."

"Take pity on my sister, Auntie!" said Pavel in almost imploring tones.

"Why should I take pity on her? She has no pity for herself if she behaves as she is doing. I say what I feel. I intended to go straight to her, but I felt sorry for Mikhailo Nikolaich, knowing that I wouldn't be able to restrain myself from bringing it all out in front of him. But you can go there quite naturally, and you can speak to her. Simply tell her that if Bakhtiarov goes to her once more she is no niece of mine. D'you hear me?"

"I can't do that, Auntie."

"Oh, of course you won't go! I knew that beforehand. It's well known that you have no family feelings whatever, that your sister is no more to you than any other woman. You haven't even the pride of a gentleman. What do you care if our family is disgraced? A family which may be said to have always been distinguished for piety and morality."

"It's nothing but slander."

"Oh, why must you torment me, why should I torment myself? You are my enemies, I see! Where am I to find consolation? Haven't I always done my best to keep things decent... and what do I get for it? Beastliness... evil... baseness.... I have my maids whipped and sent to work in the cowsheds for that sort of thing. Never mind, God will punish you! So you won't go! You're lazy, Sir, and a simpleton! You have no feelings whatever, no pity for anyone!"

In the course of this speech Perepetuya Petrovna's voice grew ever more melancholy, and at last she broke out into sobs.

"I see there is no solace in life for me, neither from my own folk nor from strangers! I'm all alone in the wide world! If only the Lord would take me to himself! In the damp earth I should at least find peace!"

Perepetuya Petrovna was in the utmost distress.

A maid came in to tell them that the patient had waked up.

"Don't tell her I'm here," said Perepetuya Petrovna. "I couldn't bear to see her, my darling. She and I are martyrs by the grace of our fine children. I'll go at once."

And go she did, without even saying good-bye to Pavel.

It had been Feoktista Savvishna who had opened Perepetuya Petrovna's eyes. She told her all the rumours about Lizaveta Vasilyevna that were being spread in the town, especially in the house friendly to herself, where formerly a great interest had been felt in Bakhtiarov, but where they were obviously angry with him for having quite stopped visiting them, and spending all his days at the Masurovs'.

Feoktista Savvishna, after her talk with Perepetuya Petrovna, made up her mind to go and spend the evening with Lizaveta Vasilyevna, to see for herself what was going on. She had been quite sure she would find Bakhtiarov there, but Lizaveta Vasilyevna was alone and did not evince particular delight on seeing her. At first the talk was languid in the extreme.

"Don't you ever go out?" asked Feoktista Savvishna.

"I haven't been out for the last few days. My head aches."

"It's the weather, everyone has colds. I've been away from home all day today. I've become so restless, it's simply dreadful. I'm here now, and after dinner I went to see your auntie. How she loves you! And I spent the whole morning and had dinner with the Kurayevs. What a charming family!"

"Oh, do you know them?"

"For heaven's sake! Know them? I may say that I am on friendly, intimate terms with that family."

"Which of the daughters is the nicest?" asked Lizaveta Vasilyevna.

"Oh, Lizaveta Vasilyevna, I simply don't know how to answer that question! Both of them you might say are like two cupids or a pair of white doves."

"Which is the dark one?"

"The elder."

"I like her best."

"Yes, that's Julie Vladimirovna—a fine girl! God send her a good husband, and she'll be an excellent wife! One can be sure she will never grieve her husband in the smallest particular, not to mention improper behaviour, as some wives do nowadays." Feoktista Savvishna uttered the last words most expressively, for she meant to sting Lizaveta Vasilyevna with them.

"There is a certain young man who likes her very much," said Lizaveta Vasilyevna, ignoring Feoktista Savvishna's last words.

"Really? And who may that be?"

"This young man has seen her two or three times. He says she is divinely beautiful, graceful, and sings inimitably."

"Oh, my goodness! Who can it be?" asked Feoktista Savvishna, her eyes blazing, as if her own beauty or that of her daughter were in question.

"He begged me," continued Lizaveta Vasilyevna, "to find out through a third party what the Kurayevs think of him, and what they would say if he were to make a proposal."

"Good heavens, who could it be?" repeated Feoktista Savvishna, still more intrigued. "Wait a minute, I think I have guessed—Bakhtiarov."

Lizaveta Vasilyevna blushed.

"Whatever put that into your head? Why should I be talking about him?"

"Well, I thought, out of friendship, perhaps. He often comes to see you."

"He comes to see my husband. Feoktista Savvishna, couldn't you say a word to the Kurayevs?"

"But about whom am I to speak, my dear? I still don't know who you mean."

"First promise you will speak to them."

"Very well. Who is it?"

"My brother."

"Pavel Vasilich? Impossible!"

"Why is it impossible?"

"You must be joking."

"Not at all."

"But how? He has not got himself a post yet."

"What of it? He has three ranks."

"Who gave them to him?"

"The tsar did. He's a candidate."

"Really I don't know. But, of course, I mustn't go back on my word. I'll speak to them, I'll do that. A suitor is never a disgrace to a girl. But I tell you frankly I haven't much hope. The chief thing is that he holds no office. If he had some post or other it would be different. Is his fortune large?"

"He has fifty souls of his own, and more after our aunt dies."

Feoktista Savvishna pondered. She was in an extremely difficult situation. On the one hand, she was longing to start matchmaking, since matchmaking had ever been a passion amounting to mania with her. Half the upper-class weddings in the town had had their origin in her manipulations, but it had never entered her mind to think of Beshmetev and the Kurayev girl as a suitable match, especially when she remembered how unfavourably she herself had spoken of Pavel and the poor opinion the young

lady had formed of him. But the passion for matchmaking was stronger than all.

"I'll speak, Lizaveta Vasilyevna, I'll be only too glad! I'm so fond of your whole family. It would give me the greatest pleasure to manage this for you. He has fifty souls and three ranks, you say?"

This conversation was interrupted by the arrival of Pavel, pale and agitated. Lizaveta Vasilyevna was very glad to see him.

"Here he is! Speak of an angel! What a long time it is since I saw you, Paul," she said, kissing her brother's forehead and looking into his face. "But what's the matter with you? What has upset you?"

Pavel made no answer and scarcely bowing to Feoktista Savvishna took a seat at a distance. Lizaveta Vasilyevna looked long at her brother and seemed to be thinking. Feoktista Savvishna, inspecting Pavel closely, entered into a conversation with him, no doubt for the purpose of discovering his mental powers. First she inquired after his mother, and then went on to question him—where had he studied, and what? What was a university? For what post was he a candidate? And on hearing that the term did not mean a candidate for any special post, she was very anxious to know why he was not in government service and what salary he would be entitled to if he joined it.

Pavel answered her reluctantly, and Lizaveta Vasilyevna was several times obliged to speak for him.

A little before eight Masurov came back, rather drunk after dinner at the club. He embraced his wife and began relating what a good time he and Bakhtiarov had been having. Pavel picked up his hat and left, despite his sister's entreaties. Feoktista Savvishna left soon after, having once more inquired into the fortune, rank and age of Pavel, and promising to inform Lizaveta Vasilyevna as to her success very soon.

VIII

MATCHMAKING

Feoktista Savvishna scarcely slept a wink all that night. Her heart thumped wildly every time she remembered that fate had at last taken pity on her and given her an opportunity for matchmaking. Anyone not possessing Feoktista Savvishna's true vocation for this branch of art would of course never have ventured to try and make a match between a man of almost plebeian origin and the daughter of a provincial aristocrat. Indeed, Feoktista Savvishna had only two points in her favour. One—that the Kurayevs' estate was said to have been put up for auction, and that their affairs were altogether in a very bad way, and two—that Vladimir Andreich, that proud gentleman who seldom addressed her, had suddenly sat down beside her the other day, and said without making the slightest preliminaries: "How do you spend your time, esteemed Feoktista Savvishna? Couldn't you find suitors for our girls?" To which, as if she had known something would turn up, she had replied that she would be delighted, but was not sure if she would be able to find young men worthy of his daughters. And Vladimir Andreich had rejoined as follows: "Nowadays girls can't be too particular", going on to say that though his daughters were by no means ordinary girls he would not be too exacting if a good, worthy candidate for their favours were to come forward.

The next day Feoktista Savvishna went to early mass and prayed for a good beginning and a successful termination of the affair and in the evening she decided to go and see the Kurayevs. On the way she feared two circumstances: one, the presence of strangers, and the other that Vladimir Andreich, whom she respected boundlessly and feared not a little, might be very grand and severe. Indeed she would, probably, never have dared to approach him on

the subject if he had not himself already set the tone. Her first fear turned out to have been groundless—the Kurayev family were sitting all alone in the corner room. But her fear as to Vladimir Andreich was to a certain extent justified. He appeared to be extremely upset about something, and in consequence the whole family was out of spirits. Feoktista Savvishna, however, was not cast down by this circumstance, unfavourable as it was to her plans, but resolved at all costs to embark upon her business.

"What are we coming to nowadays!" she began, after half an hour's chat about this, that and the other. "There never was such a time! All last winter people danced... went to balls... had a good time, but not a single wedding!"

No one replied to this remark. But Vladimir Andreich raised his morose eyes and glanced at her.

"And yet there are plenty of suitors to be had. And only too anxious to come forward," she continued.

"Where have you found suitors?" put in Vladimir Andreich. "All the dance partners are either from our ranks—married men—or mere lads."

"There are plenty who are never seen. Nowadays, you know, the more serious young men simply don't go into society. It's the times we live in—life doesn't seem to cheer anyone up. Take the late Vasily Petrovich Beshmetev's son—a fine young man, but goes nowhere, stays home all the time."

"You mean that simpleton?" interrupted the blonde. "We saw him once at your house—such a dull fellow!"

"The one who doesn't wash his hands?" added the brunette mockingly.

"That's just it. I spoke about him without knowing him, and it appears I was quite wrong," said Feoktista Savvishna adroitly. "Afterwards, when I got to know him, I found him to be a very clever man. He doesn't bow and scrape, it's true. But what of that? He looks after his family, his

household, reads books, has an estate with fifty unmortgaged serfs, and you should see his house! Bushels of table silver, and eighty serfs when his aunt dies. Besides, Perepetuya Petrovna has money—I know that for a fact. Isn't that what you call a suitor? In my opinion any girl ought to be glad of such a one."

The father and mother listened to this narration most attentively.

"It was his sister who married Masurov, wasn't it?" asked the mother.

"The very one."

"A very bad family—his aunt is Perepetuya Petrovna, and his sister Madame Masurova. God knows what a set they are!" said Madame Kurayeva, glancing at her husband as if to ask: "Am I saying the right thing?"

"What's a sister?" ejaculated Feoktista Savvishna. "She lives quite separately. Even if there is something in what they say about her, she's not her brother's keeper."

"Nonsense! What's a sister?" echoed Vladimir Andreich. "Does he serve anywhere?"

"No, he doesn't."

"Why not? Lazy, is he?"

"Not a bit of it! Just a bachelor, a single man. He doesn't see why he should. He has enough to live on, and three ranks."

Feoktista Savvishna, skilled in the business of matchmaking, realized perfectly that the parents were almost won over to her side. She was quite surprised to have succeeded so quickly. "Their affairs must be in a very bad way," she told herself and decided to get to the point at once.

"I must admit," she began in a voice that was not quite steady, "that I have come to you today purposely. Among friends I can speak frankly—he has begged me to find out what your opinion would be regarding Julie Vladimirovna."

"Me?" asked the brunette, turning pale.

"In what respect do you mean?" said Vladimir Andreich, exchanging glances with his wife.

"Surely, that's obvious. He has seen Julie Vladimirovna, and likes her very much, and greatly hopes for the honour of her hand. Of course he's not very well known here, but he says: 'I'll do my best to be worthy.' "

Vladimir Andreich pondered. But his eyes showed that Feoktista Savvishna's words had not displeased him.

"Is he making a formal proposal, or what?" he asked.

"Yes. Through me, of course, but it's just the same—a formal proposal."

"A formal proposal," repeated Vladimir Andreich as if to himself, and then he looked at his daughter.

Julie sat there more dead than alive. Her eyes were filled with tears. The blonde looked at her sister with an expression of alarm and sympathy. Tears came to her eyes too. Marya Ivanovna looked from her daughters to her husband. The silence lasted for several minutes.

"What d'you think about it, Marya Ivanovna?" said Vladimir Andreich at last, turning to his wife.

She looked into his eyes without saying a word.

"Well, and you, Julie?" he asked his daughter.

Julie Vladimirovna could scarcely screw up her courage to reply:

"I don't want to get married yet, Papa."

"Don't talk nonsense. All girls want to get married."

"I don't like him, Papa."

"And that's nonsense, too."

Having settled this, Vladimir Andreich rose and began walking up and down the room. The others sat in silence, with lowered eyes. Feoktista Savvishna's heart beat wildly and she followed him with anxious glances.

"Come into the next room, Masha," said Vladimir Andreich at last, nodding to his wife to go with him into his study.

Marya Ivanovna rose and followed her husband. The girls, too, did not stay long in the corner room. Looking at Feoktista Savvishna from under her brows, the brunette took her sister's arm and went out of the room with her.

Feoktista Savvishna, so as not to interfere with the family council, went into the salon and, leaning against the stove, began to congratulate herself on the skill she had displayed in this matter. "I've given them something to think about," she said to herself. "Oh, Lord, if only I can bring this wedding off! Four years with nothing to do! The old people seem to be on my side. The girl may make a fuss. But Vladimir Andreich is not such a very sensitive parent. When he wants a thing you must like it or lump it. I must say I didn't expect such luck. Things must be very bad with them, very bad. If only I could hear what the girls are saying." And Feoktista Savvishna, who was thoroughly acquainted with the disposition of the rooms in this friendly house, soon found the door of the girls' room and, moving with the utmost caution, laid her ear to a small crack. Silence prevailed in the room, only broken by the sound of muffled sobbing. Feoktista Savvishna at once guessed that it was the bride-to-be who was crying.

"Don't cry, *ma soeur*," the blonde was saying. "Perhaps Papa won't agree, after all. Tell him you simply can't, that you have an antipathy for him."

"Antipathy? Much more than an antipathy, *ma soeur*. I can't bear to think of him. His very name is hateful to me now. Fancy! To marry me to a fool!"

"That's just it," said the blonde. "Horrible face, bandy legs. How nice to have a husband embracing you with dirty hands! Faugh, it's disgusting!"

The brunette did not answer. For several minutes there was no sound in the room.

"If they make me marry him," began the brunette softly, "I know what to do."

"What, *ma soeur*?"

"Wait and see."

"Tell me, darling."

"I'll treat him like a flunkey."

"Of course! It's what he deserves."

"It's just what he deserves."

A few more minutes of silence ensued.

"I'm so sorry for you, *ma soeur*," said the blonde. "We won't be living together any more."

The brunette said nothing.

"It's all that horrid Feoktista Savvishna," continued the blonde.

"Of course it is—accursed freak!" said Julie.

"Rotten apple!"

"Kiev witch!"

"Devil!"

Feoktista Savvishna did not see fit to eavesdrop any more and returned to the salon. She was deeply hurt by Julie Vladimirovna's ingratitude, after she had worked so hard for her. "But never mind," she thought. "It's nothing but folly and youth. They would all like to marry a rich man. And where is one to be found? I don't care who it is I matchmake for. It's their own fault. A good *parti* will demand a dowry, and their dowries have flown out of the window, even if they are such a modish pair. We'll see what there is for them! I know—an old feather-bed, a new broom and a silver ruble. Any amount of clouts, of course, but you can't catch a good *parti* with clouts." Feoktista Savvishna went on thinking along these lines for a long time. Serious ideas passed through her mind. For instance —if you can't give your daughter a good dowry, then you have no right to bring them up according to the latest fashion, above all, you should not have them taught French. This only makes them put on airs, and does no good, and so on.

But, as was to be expected, the views expressed by Vladimir Andreich in consultation with his spouse were of a still more serious nature.

"What do you think of it, Marya Ivanovna?" he began.

"Why, Vladimir Andreich, I haven't recovered yet from the shock. It seems to me like impertinence."

"Nonsense! Where's the impertinence in it?"

Marya Ivanovna made no reply.

"I ask you—where's the impertinence in it?"

"Well, if it isn't exactly impertinence, you will agree it is rather strange."

"And there's nothing strange about it either. Do you see nothing strange in our estate being put up to auction? And isn't it strange that I have to go to Petersburg at the age of fifty and set myself to work again? To toil in some private post for a miserable four thousand a year? You seem to find nothing strange in that. Do your realize what it means?"

"I know very well, Vladimir Andreich, that our fortune is in a bad way."

"It's not in a bad way, Madame, it simply doesn't exist. What is there left to us? A lot of domestic trash and a carriage. You won't get far on that. We should be thankful if my friends manage to obtain a private post for me or we will have to go begging. Thank God, we've found a decent fellow who's willing to take one of our girls off our hands for nothing but love, as they say. Thanks to you, Madame, I've had a kink in my neck for a long time; you get everything ready-made, but I lie awake nights twisting like a fish on a hot frying-pan. My one prayer has been that somebody would turn up and marry one of our girls. Are you aware that in a month's time we shall have to leave this place? If we stayed here we could take our time about it, perhaps. And yet... we've been taking them about for four seasons, and what has come of it? Dinners, dances, flirtations, but not a single proposal! Just think of all the

possible suitors there have been: Portnov, Karayev, Melusa, Kovarevsky, Umnov, Glazopalov, Bakhtiarov—and not one of them landed! It's their own fault, I can't help it —you can't make people fall in love."

"True, but still . . . don't be angry with me, Vladimir Andreich! I quite agree with you, and yet it's a dreadful thing to sacrifice one's own daughter. . . ."

"Who's sacrificing her, deuce take it? We're not exiling her to Siberia, we're finding her a husband. It's just what she wants, if you ask me. Sacrificing her! It's I who am sacrificed. Do you think he's the fellow I'd want as a son-in-law if my affairs were in order?"

"I only mentioned it."

"You shouldn't have! Oughtn't we to think of ourselves, too?"

"Certainly we ought to."

"Who knows how much longer we shall live?"

"Who indeed? We may live a very long time."

"That's it: a long time. And now call Julie! I'll speak to her first, and then you impress upon her that she is a poor girl and will not find a better suitor, and that it's not very pleasant to be an old maid—hardly decent these days."

Marya Ivanovna went away. Left to himself, Vladimir Andreich grew moody. In a few minutes the bride-to-be, red-eyed and pale as a ghost, came in accompanied by her mother.

"Come and kiss me, Julie," said Vladimir Andreich in gentle tones. "Sit down beside me." Julie kissed her father and sat down.

"Are you aware," he began gravely, "that at the age of twenty all respectable girls are expected to think of getting married?"

"Yes, Papa."

"And are you a respectable girl?"

Julie made no reply.

"And have you reached the age of twenty? Well then, what is expected of you is that you begin to think of getting married."

"But I don't want to yet, Papa."

"It is impossible that you should not, after what I have just said: that every respectable girl of twenty wants to get married. And that leads to another question: whom are you going to marry?"

"I can't bear him!"

"Very well, you can't bear him. Do you mean you have someone else in view? Perhaps someone else is in love with you and has proposed? Who is the man? Bakhtiarov?"

"No one has proposed to me," replied Julie with a little sob. "I want to enter a convent, Papa."

"Excellent! Enter a convent, by all means, but do so immediately—tomorrow. Why should you be a burden to us? There is nothing further we can do for you. We will leave for Petersburg and you will enter a convent."

Julie's tears flowed copiously.

"See that?" said Vladimir Andreich. "Nothing but empty words—and this matter is too important for empty words. Stop crying and listen to what we have to say to you."

"I want to go on living with you, Papa."

"Living with us! A fine thing! There's a time for everything, young lady: you have lived with us long enough, it is high time you were getting married—you agree with that, don't you? Tell me, do you agree or not?"

"Yes, Papa."

"Good. Then what is keeping you from it? What is this man like?"

"He's a perfect simpleton, Papa."

"There you are! You are too young to depend on your own judgement. Let *me* tell you what sort of a man he is. In the first place, I knew his parents; his father was an honest man and his mother is a worthy, intelligent wom-

an; secondly, he has been to the university and already has three ranks. What are we to conclude? That inasmuch as he attended an institute of higher learning, he must be a clever man; and inasmuch as he comes from a respectable family, he must be a good man. But the most important thing is his fortune: fifty unmortgaged souls, which is equal to a hundred; a well-provided house, I know this because I have been the guest of Vasily Petrovich; you will have a fine carriage; you will be able to mingle with the best people; you will be a fine lady, your husband will hold a government post, you will have nothing to do but enjoy yourself; you will have children, by then his aunt will have died and left you the means to provide for their education. What better match could you desire?"

"He's not a bit genteel, Papa."

"That is impossible; he may be a little ungainly and he doesn't know how to bow and scrape. But after all, a husband is not a dancing master. It's only dancing masters and jesters who are chosen for their agility."

Vladimir Andreich grew silent. Out of all that he had said, Julie, it seemed, had understood only one thing: Papa was determined to marry her to Beshmetev and while at present his tone was gentle and persuasive, he would soon begin to shout and might even send her to a convent.

"Well, Marya Ivanovna," said Vladimir Andreich, "now *you* speak to her." And he went out.

As soon as he had gone, Julie burst into tears. Marya Ivanovna, too, could scarcely control herself.

"He'll turn me out!" said Julie, wiping her tears.

"Why oppose him, dear? You had better marry the man, Julie. Why not? God is merciful."

"But I can't bear him, *Maman*!"

"You'll get used to him, my love, really you will. It is hard to say beforehand; at first you may dislike him, but after a time you'll get fond of him. And people who marry

for love sometimes grow to hate each other. He is kind-hearted. At least you will have the upper hand, and not he."

"Oh, if I do marry him," said Julie wrathfully, "I'll show him what I'm made of! I'll let him know what it means to be forced to marry! You say he has fifty serfs, *Maman*?"

"Fifty, my angel."

"How much income is that?"

"I daresay it amounts to about three thousand, and I think they have money in the bank, too."

"I'll take all the money myself and won't let him have a kopek. I'll do nothing but visit my friends and go to parties; I don't intend to sit at home."

"You'll be able to do just as you like," said her mother. "Look at me, I married Vladimir Andreich, a fine fellow, rich and clever; to be sure we have always moved in the best society, but I have never been really happy in my marriage. Make up your mind, my dear; these days it is hardly decent for a girl not to get married."

Julie made no comment and seemed to be pondering the matter.

"Allow me to speak to my sister, *Maman*," she said after some time.

Marya Ivanovna went into the corner room, where she found Vladimir Andreich and Nadya.

"Well?" he asked on seeing his wife.

"She's almost ready to consent," replied Marya Ivanovna. "But she wants to speak to her sister first."

Nadya rose and was about to go to her.

"Wait," said Vladimir Andreich. "See that you don't spoil everything; I'll find out later if you do. Tell her you would jump at the chance if you were in her place."

"But he's an absurd creature, Papa," said the blonde.

"I'll pull your ears for you, you minx!" thundered Vladimir Andreich.

Nadya's eyes filled with tears.

"Tell her she must get married because it is the wish of her parents, and parents must be respected; that her father —that is, I—will be very angry with her and put her in a convent if she doesn't. Run along with you!"

The blonde went to her sister, whom she found plunged in meditation.

"Papa scolded me terribly on your account, *ma sœur*," Nadya said sulkily, taking a seat on the sofa.

"Why should he?"

"Because you don't want to get married. Please get married, and as soon as possible. Why should I have to suffer? He says he'll send you to a convent."

"I'll deprive him of the pleasure by marrying."

"I myself would be only too glad to get married. He does nothing but scold. This is the third time today."

"Do you know whom I want to make furious by getting married, *ma sœur*?"

"Who? B.?"

"Yes. You don't know what a horrid man he is! I want to get married to show him—"

"He sits a horse beautifully," interrupted the blonde.

"I know that, but he's a horrid man for all that. You don't know everything. Remember how he courted me in the summer? Naturally I supposed he was in love with me—"

"You were terribly in love with him, *ma sœur*," interrupted the blonde again. "You used to talk about him all night."

"I know, but fancy what he did to me at the Zharkovs' dinner-party: I was standing at the window and he comes up and says, 'What are you doing, designing monograms?' 'Yes,' says I, 'designing monograms.' 'Let me see!' says he. Why not? thinks I to myself, and I drew his monogram. He looks at the pane, twists his lips in that mocking smile of his, and walks away. I was cut to the heart and I haven't so much as nodded to him since. He tried to make up to

me again after that, but no, thank you! Let him see what he's done. I'll get married and snub him. They say he prefers married women."

Both sisters were silent for a while.

"Where is Papa?" asked the brunette at last.

"In the corner room—with *Maman*."

"Go and tell him I consent," said Julie Vladimirovna resolutely.

"Do you really, *ma sœur*?" asked the other.

"Really."

"I'll go and tell him."

"Do."

"You're not joking?"

"No."

Nadya stood there a few moments, expecting her sister to change her mind, but Julie Vladimirovna said nothing, and at last Nadya went to the corner room.

"My sister consents, Papa," she said, approaching Vladimir Andreich.

"Capital!" said he, his face lighting up. "Why doesn't she come herself?"

"She's in there, Papa."

Vladimir Andreich went into the study.

"Well, Julie?"

"I'm willing."

"Kiss me, my precious! No, kiss me three times—on such solemn occasions it is the custom to kiss three times. Your behaviour on this occasion has revealed you in a most favourable light: in the first place you have shown that you are a clever girl capable of understanding what is explained to you; in the second, your obedience proves that you have a kind heart and are submissive to your parents' will. Such qualities encourage me to hope that you will be a good wife and be happy in your marriage."

Julie would have kissed her father's hand, but Vladimir Andreich, checking her, kissed her on the forehead.

"Wait here while I speak to Feoktista Savvishna."

So saying, Vladimir Andreich returned to the corner room and seated himself on the sofa once more. Fifteen minutes later Feoktista Savvishna was with him again.

"Esteemed Feoktista Savvishna," began Vladimir Andreich, "as I think you already know, my daughter, on the one hand, is in no hurry to get married: she has had, and will yet have, a sufficiency of suitors; but on the other hand, taking into consideration the fact that it would be wrong to repulse a good man, I therefore ask you to be so kind as to invite Monsieur Beshmetev to come and see us tomorrow for a personal talk; there are certain things I wish to tell him and others that I wish to hear from him."

"Then it is settled, Vladimir Andreich? Do you mean to say it is really settled?"

"Almost settled."

"To tell you the truth, he has little hope. He said to me: 'I'd propose myself, Feoktista Savvishna, but how, I ask you, am I to propose when I haven't the slightest idea what they think of me?' "

"My daughter and our whole family think most highly of him. You may encourage him."

"So I may give him hope, Vladimir Andreich?"

"More than hope. Far be it from us to repulse a good man!"

Feoktista Savvishna was in transports of delight! She knew very well that Vladimir Andreich was only postponing his consent for the sake of appearances and to satisfy his pride, so she went straight home without wasting any more time in talk. On the way she remembered that Beshmetev himself had said nothing to her, she had spoken only to his sister, who had not mentioned a formal proposal.

"What if he refuses, on the plea that no preparations for a wedding have been made?" she thought.

This thought greatly disturbed the officious matchmaker. She would have gone then and there to see Lizaveta

Vasilyevna if the hour had not been so late, but instead of this she wrote her a letter, with the contents of which the reader will become acquainted in the next chapter.

IX

THE BETROTHAL, WITH SCENES PRECEDING AND SUCCEEDING

Pavel knew nothing of his sister's negotiations with Feoktista Savvishna, and at the very moment when Vladimir Andreich was deciding his fate, his mind was filled with other things and he was under the influence of quite different impressions. He could find no peace of mind for a long time after the departure of his aunt, so sorry did he feel for his sister.

Poor Liza! he thought. They will rob you of your good name and blacken your reputation by spreading all sorts of absurd slander about you. And what can I do? Wouldn't it be better to tell her of this malignant slander? At least she would then be on her guard. But how can I tell her? It's such a delicate subject. She has never spoken to me about Bakhtiarov. At last he resolved merely to tell her what their aunt had said, and drove off to his sister's house.

But, as we have seen, he was not able to speak to her. He returned home, very much upset and could hardly sleep all night.

What if she loves him? What if there are grounds for the gossip? he thought, and without intending to, he recalled certain unusual aspects of his sister's behaviour when in the presence of Bakhtiarov.

For instance, Lizaveta Vasilyevna, who was not a lover of cards, had often (indeed, *very* often) seated herself beside her husband when he was playing with his friend and remained sitting there the whole evening. Or . . . (but this, it is true, happened only once) she, who usually scarcely noticed Bakhtiarov, had remained alone with him in the drawing-room for over an hour. The whole of this time

Pavel had been in the next room taking down a statement to Masurov's dictation, but when he re-entered the drawing-room he had noticed that the faces of both of them showed signs of agitation; they had obviously been deep in conversation, but stopped as soon as he entered, immediately after which Bakhtiarov departed in a state of great perturbation and Lizaveta Vasilyevna, pleading the usual headache, went to bed.

Pavel's meditations were interrupted by the arrival of Lizaveta Vasilyevna, who came straight up to him in his room. The sight of his sister caused him some embarrassment. He felt he ought to tell her what he had heard from his aunt, but my hero, as the reader has had abundant occasion to observe by now, always found difficulty in talking about the things nearest his heart. Lizaveta Vasilyevna entered with a cheerful mien and handed him a letter without a word. He began to read it quite unsuspectingly, but before he could come to the end of it he was overcome. The expression of his face was so strange, not to say comic, that Lizaveta Vasilyevna burst out laughing.

"What's the matter with you, Paul?" she said.

Pavel said nothing.

The letter, highly original in its spelling, was from Feoktista Savvishna:

"Isteemed Ilizaveta Vasilivna,

"I cant ixpress with what impashense I hasten to let you no that in acordanse with your wish i went to see V.A. yesterday and made your brothers proposal to Julie Vladimirovna, not wanting any unpleasantness or to apeer a liar befor so ekselent a famly I beg him to go and make there akwaintinse at twelve oclock today and find out everything, with my best regards and kissing your darling children I remane

"Your humbel servant,

"Fiktista Panamareva"

"I'll tell you everything," began Lizaveta Vasilyevna. "Yesterday I had the sudden idea of asking Feoktista Savvishna to find out how the Kurayevs regard you, and she not only found out but even made them a proposal, and, as you see, they have accepted it."

Pavel had not yet recovered from the shock.

"Now you just get dressed and go and call on them; they are expecting you," went on Masurova.

"It must be a joke," he said at last.

"There's no time to discuss it; put on your clothes and go. Konstantin! Fetch your master's clothes!"

Lizaveta Vasilyevna began to help the valet dress her brother. My hero seemed to be half-stunned, his mind was clouded, and not until he was fully clothed did he recover his wits. Then he sat down on the sofa and announced that he would not go, that Feoktista Savvishna was always telling falsehoods and no doubt this was all stuff and nonsense. Lizaveta Vasilyevna was just about to give up all hope when another frantic note was received from the matchmaker, urging Pavel to go at once and imploring him not to be the cause of her undoing. This new impetus and Lizaveta's urgings had a compelling effect on Pavel; still half-stunned, he climbed into a droshky and soon found himself inexplicably standing in the Kurayevs' hall, where he told the footman his name and was presently invited into the drawing-room.

He stood still for a few moments, but then, realizing it was too late to go back, walked briskly through the anteroom determined at all costs not to appear embarrassed, and really managing to enter the drawing-room and approach Kurayev with a passable show of ease, murmuring the conventional: "Allow me to introduce myself."

"Very glad, very glad," said Vladimir Andreich, taking both his guest's hands in his. "Do sit down—here, on the sofa."

Pavel obeyed. Vladimir Andreich studied him carefully

from head to foot. Beshmetev began to feel uneasy. He felt he was expected to say something, but no fitting phrase came into his head.

"I knew your father and mother," said Vladimir Andreich. "I am very glad to receive you in my house. I have heard you are not fond of society, that you prefer to stay at home and devote your time to study."

"Yes, I go out very seldom," said Pavel.

"That is very praiseworthy. Frivolous young men are hardly fit for family life—they are unsteady and flit hither and thither, losing their heads, going in for dissipation. True, of course—one ought not to avoid society...."

Vladimir Andreich paused with the intention of giving his guest an opportunity to speak, but Pavel said nothing.

He certainly is not talkative, thought Vladimir Andreich. I'm afraid I shall have to broach the subject myself.

And he did:

"Yesterday Feoktista Savvishna...."

Again he paused to give Beshmetev the opportunity to interrupt him, but he only sat there with downcast eyes, blushing furiously.

"You have done us the honour of asking for the hand of our elder daughter through Feoktista Savvishna," went on Vladimir Andreich.

"It would make me extremely happy..." said Pavel at last.

"I believe you, and appreciate your sentiments," said Vladimir Andreich. "But allow me to be perfectly frank with you: your fate depends entirely upon our daughter's choice. We have no right to exercise force. It would be only natural, and indeed I may say it is what I expect that, obeying the dictates of her heart, she will give her consent. But her old parents take their own view of things: in the first place we feel that our daughter is still very young and are filled with apprehension at the thought of giving her into another person's hands. It is only natural that we

should like to know what her life is going to be? Love is one thing, the means of existence is another, and for that reason, in giving our consent, we should like to know, if only for our own peace of mind, that she for whom we have provided to the best of our ability is not about to enter upon a life of poverty. Therefore be so good as to tell me what your circumstances are."

"I own fifty serfs."

"Unmortgaged?"

"Yes."

"And have you any other means?"

"A little."

"About how much?"

"About five thousand rubles."

"And nothing has been sold, mortgaged, or squandered since your father's death?"

"Nothing at all."

"Thank you for your confidence; to tell you the truth, I . . . you'll forgive me, I hope; it's all past history now . . . but to tell you the truth I had difficulty in making up my mind . . . indeed, was not inclined to advise it . . . seeing, however, that it was her own wish, I felt I had no right to oppose her; the voice of the heart is the one to be listened to in such matters . . . she has had many suitors, some quite insistent, but what's to be done? She will have none of them. The Lord's ways are inscrutable. I have every right to be proud of my lineage: when you are a member of our family you will understand this, and I trust you will repay us in love and esteem for the sacrifice we are making. . . . And now allow me to call my wife. Marya Ivanovna!"

Marya Ivanovna came in, bowed simperingly to Pavel, and sat down in the nearest armchair.

"Pavel Vasilich has done our family the honour of asking the hand of Julie," said Kurayev. "I have told him that the answer depends on her."

"Yes, indeed, it depends entirely upon her own wish," replied Marya Ivanovna.

"Nowadays," continued Vladimir Andreich, "views on marriage have changed. A bride used to be brought to the altar by force. We could never allow ourselves to do such a thing."

"No, indeed! We could never allow such a thing!" echoed Marya Ivanovna.

"Call Julie."

Marya Ivanovna went out and presently returned with Julie.

"Come here, Julie," said Vladimir Andreich. "Pavel Vasilich has done you the honour of asking your hand, to which you yesterday gave indication of your consent. Repeat your words now."

Julie, her face pale and tear-drops hanging on her eyelashes, murmured almost inaudibly:

"I consent."

Pavel appeared to hear and comprehend nothing. He stood looking down at the floor as if afraid to meet anybody's eyes and only roused himself when Vladimir Andreich, placing his daughter's hand in the young man's, said:

"Receive her, Pavel Vasilich, and, as the custom is, give her a kiss."

Pavel seized the hand and pressed it to his lips. He felt his betrothed's hand tremble in his, and at last screwing up the courage to look at her, saw tears in her eyes. How lovely he found her face in that mournful aspect! How sad to see her tears! He was ready to throw himself on his knees at her feet and implore her not to weep, assuring her that he would devote his entire life to making her happy and content. But he merely heaved a profound sigh and said nothing.

"When do you think of pledging your troth, Pavel Vasilich?" asked Vladimir Andreich.

"I hadn't thought about it."

"Have you any objections to doing so today?"

"I should be only too glad."

"Good. The priest is ready."

They all went into the salon.

The priest was indeed ready, waiting in the icon corner. As soon as the Kurayevs came in he silently indicated where the young people were to stand. Pavel and Julie stood next to each other but some distance apart; Vladimir Andreich, Marya Ivanovna, and Nadya prayed. A few maid-servants peeped into the room from the hall, eager to get a glimpse of the ceremony and the young mistress's betrothed, and some of them passed distinctly uncomplimentary remarks on Pavel's appearance.

"How ugly he is!" exclaimed a flaxen-haired damsel.

"That he is, wench!" confirmed a woman with a disagreeable expression.

"What a broad face he's got!" observed a girl of about thirteen.

"Get out of the way and let me have a look!" said the washerwoman, pushing her way through the group. "Oh, ain't he nice, ain't he handsome!"

The chamber-maids giggled at her simplicity. Later the footmen, too, came from the servants' quarters, but they stood and watched without comment. The only one to open his mouth was an old man of about sixty in a long grease-stained coat beneath which showed a white collar, who kept bowing down to the floor and chanting with the priest. At last the ceremony was over.

"Champagne!" cried Vladimir Andreich.

The champagne was long in arriving because of an argument that arose in the pantry, the old man in the white collar insisting on having the honour of taking it in.

"Out of the way, you old turnip! You'll break it, and it cost twelve rubles," said a young footman, trying to snatch the tray out of the old man's hands.

"You young whippersnapper, you! How long is it since you was tending the swine? That's where you belong! Pour it out, Anna Semyonovna, that's a good woman," said the old man, holding on to the tray and turning to the housekeeper.

"Keep your hands off, Semyon," said she, and poured out the wine.

Spiridon Spiridonych (for such was the old man's name) carried the tray into the salon with a smile of satisfaction on his face. He walked very sedately, as became an old and experienced serving-man.

"Was there nobody else to bring it in?" asked Kurayev, displeased that his future son-in-law should see his footman in such a grease-stained coat.

"Begging your pardon, Vladimir Andreich, Sir," said the old man. "I was so bold as to take the tray away from Semyon, he's too young yet."

"This man was my father's servant," explained Kurayev, turning to Pavel. "And to this day he loves a ceremony. My father lived in grand style, you know."

"Andrei Mikhailych of blessed memory was good enough to be fond of me," said the old man, "and always did things in style. Three of us used to ride behind his carriage."

"That'll do! Serve the wine," said Vladimir Andreich.

Toasts were drunk. The master of the house was the first to congratulate the newly betrothed couple; he was followed by Marya Ivanovna, then by Nadya, then by the priest.

"Allow me, Vladimir Andreich, Sir, to offer my humble congratulations," said Spiridon.

Everybody laughed, even Pavel smiled.

"Well, let us hear your congratulations," said Vladimir Andreich. "And put them in ... er ... you know ... fine, high-sounding phrases, as you know how to!"

"I have prepared them, Sir, as well as my poor mind is able: I have the honour to congratulate you, Vladimir

Andreich, and the honour to congratulate you, noble benefactress Marya Ivanovna, and I offer you my congratulations, Nadezhda Vladimirovna." As he pronounced these words he kissed the hands of his master, his mistress, and the younger *Mademoiselle* in turn. "As for you, my lady, words fail me," he said to Julie Vladimirovna. "And for you," addressing Pavel Vasilich, "I can but bow before you and lift up a prayer to heaven." And he did bow, with much scraping of heels.

"Call in the others," said Vladimir Andreich, wishing to show his future son-in-law how many servants he had.

"Aren't they too young yet, Vladimir Andreich?" asked Spiridon, evidently grudging his colleagues a share in the honour he had enjoyed.

"No, call them," repeated Kurayev. "An amusing old man," he remarked when Spiridon had gone. "But he's still hale and hearty. In fact he works more than the young ones."

"How can you say such a thing, Papa?" put in the blonde sister. "He doesn't do a thing!"

Vladimir Andreich threw her a meaning look.

"He is very diligent and industrious," said Marya Ivanovna in support of her husband.

Meanwhile Spiridon Spiridonych was back in the servants' quarters.

"Run along, feather-pates, and congratulate your betters," he said.

"Is them our orders?" asked the disagreeable-looking woman.

"Orders or no orders, that's what you're to do. Oh, you ignoramuses! Mind you kiss all of their hands!"

"Spiridon Spiridonych, do teach us how we ought to offer our congratulations," came in the mocking voice of a serving-girl, so pretty that a young lieutenant was said to have fallen in love with her.

"Hm, how to offer congratulations?" said Spiridon Spiri-

donych, pleased that his advice had been asked for. "Anybody can tell you how that's done: just say 'I have the pleasure of offering you my congratulations.' "

When he had finished with the women he went to the footmen's room and told them they were to go and offer their congratulations.

Into the salon came a flock of serving-girls, displaying a variety of features and figures. First they kissed the hands of the betrothed, then of Vladimir Andreich, Marya Ivanovna, and Nadya. The younger ones, who scarcely opened their lips as they murmured their congratulations, showed a tendency to giggle, but the older ones spoke clearly and distinctly and with grave faces. Spiridon Spiridonych could not resist offering his congratulations a second time. Going up to Pavel Vasilich he said: "I have the honour of bowing to you a second time." He kissed his hand and then whispered into his ear: "I go with Julie Vladimirovna as part of her dowry, Sir." Pavel wanted to slip him some money, but suddenly remembered he ought to give all the servants presents and that he had no money on him; this greatly increased his embarrassment.

At last the congratulations were over and they sat down to dinner. According to custom, the betrothed couple were seated next to each other, but they exchanged not a word throughout the meal. Julie sat looking downcast, her shawl pulled tightly around her. As for Pavel, if the expression of his face could not have been called exactly comic, it was at least very odd. To all the questions with which Vladimir Andreich tried to draw him into conversation, he made short and disconnected replies. Occasionally he glanced at his betrothed as if to address her, but apparently could think of nothing appropriate to say. The blonde listlessly related to her mother how the cruel cook's boy had struck a dog belonging to a workman, coming to the kitchen to do some repairs that morning, and how the poor dog had scuttled round and round the yard with its tail be-

tween its legs, for over a half an hour yelping and licking its injured side. On the whole, everyone felt ill at ease.

After dinner Pavel wanted to go home, but Vladimir Andreich would not hear of it. Towards evening Pavel's betrothed paid him slightly more attention, having received an admonition from her father, who had given her to understand that it was her duty, at least in the presence of others, to display some feeling, or at any rate not to scowl. At about 8 o'clock some friends of Vladimir Andreich called: a commission merchant, the chairman of the criminal court, the Counsellor Korotayev—in a word, the great ones of the gubernia. More congratulations were offered. Pavel felt exceedingly uncomfortable, but his fiancée made an obvious effort to appear gay. Soon the guests sat down to cards. Julie seated herself beside Pavel, and began making conversation.

"Don't you like playing cards?"

"No, I don't."

"I love it. I can even play whist. My cousin taught me; they say he lost all his money at cards."

Pavel made no reply and Julie had to begin all over again.

"Where did you live before you came here?" she asked.

"In Moscow."

"What did you do there?"

"Studied at the university."

"Studied? How old are you?"

"Twenty-one."

"Why did you study so long?"

"My course took that time. I studied four years at the Gymnasium and four years at the university."

"How long did you study altogether?"

"Eight years."

"What a long time! You must have been bored to death! I spent only two years in a boarding-school and even so I cried every day."

"I wasn't bored."

Again the conversation flagged.

"I never expected to remain here," said Pavel after a long pause.

"And why did you?"

The reader will agree that to this question Pavel ought to have replied in the following manner: "I remained because I met you! You appeared before me as in a vision, saying: 'Stay!' And I—" etc., as any young man who knew how to conduct himself with the ladies would have done. But Pavel, though he may have felt that something of the sort was expected of him, said only:

"Circumstances kept me here."

"What a pity! Life in Moscow must be much more interesting."

Again Pavel ought to have replied that no spot in the world was as interesting for him as the place where he now was. But he said nothing at all, only stealing a shy glance at Julie during the prolonged silence that ensued. She heaved a sigh.

"You look so sad!" said Beshmetev, in a scarcely audible tone.

"Anyone would be sad in my place."

"Why?"

The only reply was a bitter smile.

At last the evening came to an end. On parting, Julie said in a voice loud enough for everyone to hear:

"I shall be expecting you tomorrow."

Pavel left in a dazed and agitated state. On reaching home he ran to his mother's room without even waiting to take off his overcoat and threw his arms round her.

"Mother, I'm going to get married!" he repeated several times.

The sick woman made no response to his tenderness and appeared not to understand what he was saying, although he spent a good half hour explaining that he had found the

woman he loved, had received her consent, and was happy. For all reply, the old woman made the sign of the cross over him, gazing at him mournfully. He left her room and went to bed. But he could not sleep. Longing to share his feelings with someone, he ordered horses, but without waiting for them he set out for his sister's house on foot. After traversing a few streets he was out of breath and had to come to a stop.

What if she's asleep? It must be late, he thought. Of course she's asleep. What a pity! Ah, what a pity! How I should like to talk to her! But I can't expect others to stay awake just because I can't sleep myself. She, probably, has no idea of what has happened. I had better wait until tomorrow.

Having come to this decision, he turned his face towards home. Back in his room once more, even after getting into bed, he could not resist asking his valet:

"Have you heard, Konstantin? I'm going to be married."

"Yes, I've heard. Is she pretty, Pavel Vasilich?"

"Very."

"And has she serfs?"

"Oh, yes. I'll find you a girl and you'll get married too."

"If that is your wish, Pavel Vasilich, I have no objection."

X

AGAIN OF THIS AND THAT

It was nearly twelve o'clock when Pavel woke up the next day, for his thoughts had kept him awake until morning. All night long disconnected images had been crowding into his mind: one moment he had a vision of the good Vladimir Andreich, who had shown him such affection (he considered Vladimir Andreich very good and kind); the next there floated by the image of his betrothed, who only yesterday had seemed so inaccessible, whom he had scarce-

ly hoped ever to see again, and behold! he had not only seen her, he had sat beside her and talked to her: she was his betrothed, she was said to be in love with him, and in two weeks' time, according to Vladimir Andreich, she was to become his wife! Was not that like a dream?

He thought in ecstasy that on the morrow he would again see the brunette, would see her every day, would, perhaps, find an opportunity to tell her how he had loved her this long while, and perhaps she herself would make a confession of love. "How will she tell me? No doubt she will blush red as a rose! Ah, how fair she will be at that moment!" But no, it is beyond my powers to follow Pavel's meditations on his betrothed, on her elevated sensibilities, on their mutual love—in a word, on all those delights love brings in its wake, of which, by the way, my hero had no true knowledge, nothing but vague imaginings. He anticipated the most delightful future: here he was, a married man; he would send to Moscow for books and devote himself to his studies; he would pass his examination and become a professor; he would give himself up utterly to scholarship. Merciful heavens! What could be more perfect? A happy domestic life and a successful public one!

On waking up, Pavel felt no inclination to rise; once more the dreams of the night took possession of his imagination. He was lying facing the wall when suddenly he felt a tug at the blanket. He turned over: Masurov was standing there.

"Greetings to the newly-betrothed!" cried his guest. "What do you mean by sleeping so long? A fine trick you've played us! Wonderful! Marvellous! I only heard about it this morning. Get up and let's have some champagne!"

Pavel, somewhat disconcerted, hurried into his dressing-gown and slippers.

"Pshaw! What a fine figure you cut, you rogue!" said Masurov.

"How is my sister?"

"A fine sister! She left for the country last night. I can't tell you how annoyed I am. Judge for yourself—why should she go to the country at a time like this?"

"Why, indeed?" said Pavel, astonished and distressed by the news.

"The Lord only knows! Yesterday she tried to make me promise to drop Bakhtiarov. 'It's indecent,' says she. 'I'm still young, there may be gossip.' The devil only knows what's got into her head! As if I cared a straw what the magpies chatter about!"

Pavel understood only too well the reason for his sister's sudden departure. It was clear she had been to see their aunt, who had given her her own version of the town gossip.

And so here he was left alone! There was not a soul in whom he could confide at this important moment of his life. But he realized that this was practically the only way in which Lizaveta Vasilyevna could silence the gossip about herself and Bakhtiarov, and he was glad she had gone.

"Has she gone for long?" he asked.

"I don't even know that. And she's taken the children with her. House like a tomb! Couldn't sleep all night! Exasperating, deuced exasperating! Write her a letter, Brother, that's a good chap! Such nonsense! I complained of her to Perepetuya Petrovna today. And how furious the old lady is with you! I tell you frankly, Brother, you'd better keep away from her. She'll horsewhip you. She's the one who told me you were marrying Kurayeva. Think of that now! Charming girl, damn it all! But Auntie's ready to eat you all up: you and Liza and the Kurayevs—guts and all! And she said such things about Feoktista Savvishna for making the match that I almost called in the police. Swore like a trooper! I'm the only one she praises. Offered me a loan a few days ago. Don't go near her! If she doesn't horse-

whip you she's sure to give you a few smart blows. 'And I won't go to the wedding,' says she. 'Not for anything! And I won't have anything more to do with him. If he wants to marry a beggar, let him go begging!' When's the wedding to be?"

"Soon."

"Have me as best man?"

"If you like."

"Good. I'll order a new coat. Won five hundred rubles from Bakhtiarov yesterday. Got enough money for the wedding? I can lend you some. Good fellow, Bakhtiarov! A perfect marvel! Goes into raptures over you. Do write to Liza and tell her to come back. She won't listen to me. Well, I'm off. I'll drop in to see the Kurayevs this evening. Don't know them very well, but that doesn't matter. Have to offer my congratulations! Is the girl in love with you?"

"I don't know."

"Then who does? You have a pretty life ahead of you, I must say! Farewell! Must go and call on Bakhtiarov! Should I step in to see Mother? How is it she never recognizes me?"

"Because you come so seldom."

"No time! 'Pon my word, no time! Farewell, don't forget to write to Liza. I came especially to ask you to. Well, I'm off! See you tonight!"

As soon as Masurov went away Pavel began to dress. He took even more pains with his toilet than he had done before going to the assembly; he made the hairdresser do his hair five times and even then was dissatisfied. His dress-coat seemed to him deplorable, his waistcoat still worse. He rated himself for his laziness and apathy in not having got himself a decent wardrobe while in Moscow. He was ready by noon, but just then Vladimir Andreich was announced. Pavel was disconcerted. He was ashamed to receive his future father-in-law in his house, which could in no way be compared with the aristocratic establishment

of the Kurayevs, and for that reason he met him with a troubled countenance. As for Vladimir Andreich, he entered, as might have been expected, with a haughty mien. First he announced that his call was prompted by his wish to convey in person the regards of his entire family and especially of his elder daughter, who, it seems, had been expecting Pavel since eight o'clock in the morning. He next inquired after the health of Pavel's mother, and on hearing that she was asleep, begged him not to disturb her. He then spoke of other things, lightly touching on the fact that his leader, an unruly beast, had got out of hand and turning the conversation by imperceptible stages to the subject of Pavel's house (Beshmetev owned his own house).

"The house seems to be dry," observed Vladimir Andreich, "but it requires some renovation. I hope you will forgive me if, as your future father-in-law, I take the liberty of offering you some advice in this matter."

"I shall be only too glad," replied Pavel.

"I thought you would be. Since there's not enough time left to plaster the walls, I would advise you simply to put up French wall-paper. You'll find it inexpensive and attractive."

"That's exactly what I mean to do."

"Quite right. And then, of course, you will want new furniture. The furniture of the late Kalinin is going for a song. For a mere nine hundred rubles you can furnish two rooms complete—a bedroom and a drawing-room. The bedroom furniture is all upholstered in maroon velvet with steel buttons. A dream, simply a dream! The cushion-covers all chintz, and what chintz! And a mahogany pier-glass with two dainty bronze candelabra. The drawing-room suite is all walnut and uncommonly fine workmanship!"

Pavel accepted this piece of advice as well, saying he would be only too glad to buy the furniture. Kurayev was equally interested in Pavel's carriages and manipulated the conversation so skilfully that Pavel himself invited his

future father-in-law to inspect his stables and carriage-house. Kurayev made some discreet criticisms of the pair of bays, the yellow carriage, the brougham with the broken wheels, and even of the two town sleighs that Perepetuya Petrovna had praised so highly. According to Vladimir Andreich a true gentleman required only three equipages, each with its proper designation, namely: a carriage and pair for his wife, to go visiting in high society and to balls, a droshky for his own use, and a handsome town sleigh. He would require three horses: two for the carriage, the third to be driven alone. Pavel quite agreed with this and declared himself ready to buy them this very minute if he only knew where to get them. It appeared that Vladimir Andreich knew where all this could be procured for a very moderate sum: a two-seated carriage, for instance, was being sold as part of the estate of the aforementioned Kalinin; it had Viennese springs and the body had been made in Petersburg, and it was being offered for the trifling sum of fifteen hundred rubles. He advised Pavel to buy his horses at the Kirkin stud farm, where the horses, besides being of the purest breed, were uncommonly hardy and docile.

Thus chatting, they returned to the house.

"For his wedding," Vladimir Andreich was saying, "a man wants everything to be new, including himself, for he is, so to speak, embarking upon a new life for which he must provide adequately. Take for instance the peasant: even the peasant has a new blue coat made for the occasion; there's no shame in borrowing money for such an event, because it comes only once in a lifetime. The ancient Greeks, history tells us, made weddings the occasion for feasting and rejoicing, for at his wedding a man must show himself to the world in the best possible light. We do not have to go far to show how different married life is from the life of a bachelor. Take, for instance, dishes: plates, cups, saucers, pots and pans, et cetera. Trifles, but

they all cost money and there's no doing without them. It's all very well if a man has a vast supply of such things to begin with, but many a young man has to start with nothing. I daresay you were left with a lot of such stuff after your father's death?"

"Oh, yes, a great deal," replied Pavel.

"On a visit I once made to the late Vasily Petrovich I seem to remember seeing a silver vase or tray or samovar or something of the sort which struck me as being exceptionally fine old rococo."

"It was, probably, a decanter you saw."

"No, not a decanter . . . perhaps a goblet? I really can't remember. And no wonder . . . you can imagine . . . it was a long time ago. The only thing I remember is that I saw a big and very handsome piece of silver. You own silver?"

"Yes."

"Name a few of the larger pieces if you don't mind. I should like to remember."

"A silver decanter."

"No."

"A tray, a coffee-pot, a teapot."

"No, none of those things."

"A basket, two large goblets."

"Is that all?"

"Yes."

"All? No more silver?"

"Only spoons and forks."

"But I suppose you have a great many of them?"

"I really can't say; about seven dozen spoons, it seems."

"Well then, it must have been the basket I saw."

"Perhaps."

"Allow me to see it again. To tell you the truth, I have a weakness for antiques."

Pavel was about to go and fetch the basket, but Vladimir Andreich was too polite to allow such a thing and

asked permission to go with him to the china-closet in which the silver was kept. Pavel took his guest to the corner room and allowed him to examine the contents of two enormous cupboards filled with silver, china, and cut glass.

Vladimir Andreich seemed highly pleased with what he saw. There was any amount of silver (including spoons and forks) to say nothing of china and glass. On returning to the drawing-room Vladimir Andreich resumed the conversation with characteristic subtlety; he asked Pavel where his estate was, whether he owned a country house, and what his peasants did for a living. On learning that most of them were artisans and glaziers and that in the summer-time they went to Petersburg and Moscow in search of work, he justly observed that, on the one hand, estates of that sort were less trouble to their owners, while on the other hand, they brought in less profit, because the peasants became spoiled away from home and learned to drink tea, a thing which was causing a decrease in the peasant population and the corruption of their morals. At last he took his leave, first expressing regret that he had not seen Pavel's mother and begging him to give her his regards, after which, telling Pavel he was expected within an hour and a half, he climbed with youthful agility into his carriage. The unruly horse struck out viciously, the other set out at a lively trot.

When Vladimir Andreich was gone Pavel spent some moments thinking about him. What good practical sense he has! he said to himself. His advice will be of the greatest help to me. Heavens! Did I ever dream of such good fortune? To marry a girl with whom I am passionately in love, to be accepted into an intelligent cultivated family! What a pity Liza is not here! How she would rejoice with me! She's such an exceptional woman!

The thought of his sister saddened Pavel and he began glancing at the clock impatiently: a whole hour must pass

before the time set by Vladimir Andreich came round. This reminded him that very little time remained until the wedding, that he must hasten to make his purchases, for which purpose it would be necessary to take five thousand rubles out of the bank. Resolving to see to this immediately, he went to his mother and explained at length that he needed money and asked her to give him her check-book. Again the old woman appeared not to understand him clearly, but she gave her son the key, made the sign of the cross over him, and kissed him on the forehead.

In the meantime Vladimir Andreich paid a call on Perepetuya Petrovna, who was, however, not at home. He asked to speak to one of the more intelligent servants. Pelagea came.

"Be so kind, my good woman," said he, "as to tell Perepetuya Petrovna that Kurayev, her future kinsman, came to see her and greatly regrets that she was not at home, but will come again in a few days' time and will send all the members of his family, all of whom esteem her highly, to pay their respects. Good-bye, and see you do not get the message wrong."

From there he went to see Feoktista Savvishna, who *was* at home.

"Good-day to you, esteemed Feoktista Savvishna! In the first place, allow me to kiss your hand and offer greetings from my wife and daughters."

Feoktista Savvishna was greatly flustered by the visit of so esteemed a person as Vladimir Andreich, and by the cordiality of his salutation; she rushed into the maids' room and ordered them to bring tea, coffee, and refreshments "for a very dear guest," then, throwing a shawl over her bare shoulders, returned to Kurayev and apologized for receiving him in so unworthy a manner.

Vladimir Andreich reassured her and begged her not to go to any trouble for his sake. He announced that he had just been to see Beshmetev, whom he found to be a most

excellent and admirable young man, but still very young and inexperienced in matters of matrimony, so much so in fact that he could hardly be expected to know that it was customary for a young man to make his betrothed presents—dress-lengths, various trinkets and so on, and that Vladimir Andreich found it hard to speak to him of such things, in case he took it for avarice, whereas it was merely the desire for Beshmetev to do the right thing for the sake of appearances.

The astute Feoktista Savvishna instantly saw the light.

"Why, Vladimir Andreich, what d'you suppose I am for? I'm a matchmaker, aren't I? And as such I consider it my bounden duty to see that all is carried out properly. It's no use depending on relatives. Perepetuya Petrovna has shown herself to be a low, spiteful woman; I don't like talking about such things, but you wouldn't believe the injustice I've suffered at her hands, and all on account of my good nature, you might say."

"I would be very grateful if you would ... er ... just drop a little hint now and then as to this or that; for instance, that he ought to make his betrothed a present of a necklace, or a few bracelets—not for our sake, mind, but for the sake of society, so that everybody will know. And now I must be going, Madam."

"Oh, but Vladimir Andreich, do stay and have something—a cup of coffee or a glass of vodka! It's very cold out today."

"I can't, I really can't. I take nothing, as you know, neither food nor drink, before dinner. Good-bye."

This time Pavel went to the Kurayevs in better spirits; he resolved to be as lively as possible and try to get to know his betrothed better. He even decided what he would say to her: he would tell her about a dream he had had of living in Moscow, in a certain house on a certain street, how opposite his house there had been a big house of yellow masonry, and how one day as he sat looking at it a

young girl had stepped out of it—a gloriously beautiful young girl, and how he had longed to go over and speak to her but lacked the courage and just sat where he was and looked at her day after day, and then one day she stopped coming out. Julie would be sure to guess she was the girl, and in this way he would let her know that he had fallen in love with her even while he was in Moscow. This was what Pavel thought of as he drove to the Kurayevs, but on entering the drawing-room in which the ladies were seated he was again seized with embarrassment.

Marya Ivanovna said they had been waiting for him for some time and Julie bowed to him stiffly. Pavel sat down at a distance. Vladimir Andreich was in his study; all attempts to make conversation failed, though Marya Ivanovna did her best: she asked Pavel about his mother, observed that the weather was damp and for that reason Julie had a bad headache and she herself seemed to be getting one. Julie said nothing. Nadya played with the dog. Despite his resolution to be talkative, Pavel could not find a word to say; he was longing to sit next to Julie, but dared not even look into her face, and sat with lowered eyelids, contenting himself with admiring the pretty little foot which peeped provocatively from under her gown.

At last Vladimir Andreich came in.

"Ah, here you are!" he said, on catching sight of Pavel. He shook hands with him and gave orders for dinner to be served.

"Where have you been?" he asked.

"To the bank," said Pavel.

"What for?"

"To get some money."

"Hm-m," drawled Vladimir Andreich. "Much?"

"Five thousand."

"A nice sum. Are you thinking of buying anything?"

"Ye-es, but I don't know where and what."

"There's no reason why you should trouble your head with such things; I will go with you myself. We'll have dinner and set out. Hurry up with that dinner! You'll have to forgive us, Julie Vladimirovna; I'll be taking your fiancé away from you again, but it can't be helped. Please God, he'll sit beside you all the time once you are married. Blushing, are you? Here, give me a kiss for that."

Silently and sulkily Julie went over and kissed her affectionate papa.

As before, the only one to talk during dinner was Vladimir Andreich. He told Pavel about a grand dinner given by the nobility in honour of some important personage, and said that he had himself been put in charge of the arrangements and had carried out his duties so successfully that after dinner the important personage had come up to him and kissed him.

Towards the end of dinner Pavel was handed a note. It was from Feoktista Savvishna, written with her usual spelling, and reading as follows:

"Most grashus Pavil Vasilich,

"I have just bin to see your mother and missed seeing you because I supose you are with your dear betrothed and that is why I am riting to you there. I have a friend Agrafena Matveyevna Salubieva who is selling some joolry very cheep, a braselet, a necklis, and two rings and in your present situation perhaps you would like to buy them for your Julie Vladimirovna which I can bring them to you whenever you say.

"Awaiting the plesure of your anser,

"Your devoted servant,

"Fiktista Panamareva."

On rising from the table Pavel wrote Feoktista Savvishna a note in which he thanked her for her trouble and asked her to bring him the jewelry the next day. Then he

and Vladimir Andreich set out on their shopping expedition. On that day nothing of greater moment took place. Pavel and Vladimir Andreich went from one shop to another until nine o'clock in the evening, and when they got back were told that Julie had such a bad headache that she had gone to bed. Marya Ivanovna was knitting a woollen scarf and Nadya was reading a French novel. On hearing of the indisposition of his daughter, Vladimir Andreich went to her room and returned in a few minutes to tell Pavel that he, too, could see her if he wished to. Pavel unquestionably wished to, and with a beating heart followed Vladimir Andreich down the dark corridor leading to the girls' room.

The boudoir of any young girl, but especially of the girl with whom we are in love, holds a strange and elusive charm for us when we are young. The truth of this statement is borne out by the innumerable poems on this theme. A once popular poet has said that the air of such a boudoir is permeated with the maiden's breath. When Pavel entered Julie's room he was aware not only of the maiden's breath, but also of the strong odour of eau-de-Cologne with which she had moistened her forehead. Good heavens! No, I give up... my feeble pen is unable to express Pavel's feelings at that moment. Julie lay in bed in a loose jacket, her bandaged head resting on a batiste pillow. Opposite the bed stood a bureau with a mirror over it, and on the bureau there were a clock in a case, two bottles of scent, a small folder for letters, a bell, a plaster Cupid holding up a warning finger, and many other knick-knacks. Beside the window stood winged armchairs and a small carved table, and against the opposite wall was Nadya's bed, with a silk coverlet and batiste pillows on it. Pavel found all this exquisite.

"Well, here's your Pavel Vasilich," said Vladimir Andreich as he entered his daughter's room. "Sit down—you take the armchair and I'll sit on the bed."

"Don't you feel well?" murmured Pavel in scarcely audible tones.

"My head aches."

Pavel looked so distraught that even Vladimir Andreich noticed it.

"Take care, Julie, you'll make him cry! Brace yourself, young man, don't give up hope! She'll recover in time for the wedding. But sit down; why don't you sit down?"

Pavel did sit down and gazed in silence at his love.

"You were gone a long time," says Julie, prompted by a meaning glance from her father.

"We had to visit a great many places," says Pavel.

"Tell her what we bought for two thousand rubles. Yes, indeed, Julie Vladimirovna, that's the sort we are. All you do is lie in bed, but we men, begad, like to be up and doing!"

"I could have done the shopping myself," says Julie. "I like shopping."

"See how perky she is! But does your head ache?"

"Yes, Papa."

"Shall I tell you how to cure it?"

"Please do, Papa."

"Kiss your lover and it will all go away, won't it, Pavel Vasilich?"

"How can you, Papa?" said Julie.

Pavel blushed.

"It will, I tell you! Come, Pavel Vasilich, cure your sweetheart! Show some spirit, Sir!"

He took Pavel's hand and pulled him out of the chair.

"Kiss him, Julie! A girl's expected to kiss the man she's going to marry."

Pavel trembled in every limb, and Julie, too, seemed to find difficulty in obeying her father. Reluctantly she lifted her head and kissed her fiancé, instantly dropping back on the pillow and surreptitiously wiping her lips on her handkerchief. But Pavel, it seems, did not notice this.

"Both of you red as beetroot!... Ah, youth, youth! How reckless are their..." Vladimir Andreich undoubtedly intended to say "flights," but he stopped in time, realizing that the word would hardly fit the present case.

A little later, Vladimir Andreich led Pavel away from his fiancée, to negotiate with the upholsterer, who had come about the furniture.

When they were gone Julie made a despairing gesture and fell to weeping.

Pavel left the Kurayevs after supper. He went to say good-bye to Julie, this time kissing only her hand.

On the way home he gave himself up to sweet dreams. He painted pictures of his conjugal life in the brightest colours. First there would be the wedding; what a glorious, yet what an awe-inspiring day! He would have to take himself firmly in hand and even... even... but afterwards everything would be easier, everything would go smoother. Little by little he would become used to his new condition and be able to enjoy it fully in peace and quiet. But by this time Pavel had arrived at his own door and the necessity of climbing out of the carriage interrupted his dreams for a short time.

On entering the house he was handed a letter from Lizaveta Vasilyevna:

> "Forgive me, Paul," she wrote, "for going away without telling you, and leaving you at such a time, but there was nothing else for me to do. My duty and my poor children required it. I will tell you everything later, when I am in a state to do so; at present you will have to get married without me. Pray God to send you happiness, for which I also pray. But you, you ought to be happy with your wife. Farewell!"

My hero perused the letter almost mechanically, so absorbed was he in his new feelings and circumstances.

XI

THE WEDDING

The two weeks specified by Vladimir Andreich passed swiftly. This period, which for most husbands-to-be is highly poetic, was for Pavel only too prosaic. Usually he set out for the Kurayevs' early in the morning filled with a firm resolution to get to know his beloved better. But this he never succeeded in doing, in the first place, owing to his own shyness and his fiancée's coldness, and in the second to lack of time. There was no end to the shopping expeditions Vladimir Andreich took him for. French wallpaper already adorned the walls of his house, horses and carriages were bought, gifts presented to his fiancée, in consequence of which not a kopek of the five thousand rubles was left in Pavel's pocket, and still there remained many expenses to be met. He was faced by the necessity of borrowing money, but from whom? He was in a tight place and would really have found himself high and dry if fate, in the person of Perepetuya Petrovna, had not come to his aid. His aunt, already angry with him for not wishing to "prevent his sister's ruin" as she put it, denounced him completely when she learned that he had pledged his troth without consulting her. But, suddenly, quite unexpectedly, she seemed to take a sincere liking to her future relatives, and began to play an active part in her nephew's matrimonial preparations. The explanation lay in the courtesy of Vladimir Andreich, who himself called on Perepetuya Petrovna and subsequently sent his wife and daughters to pay their respects. The old maid was excessively vain. The attentions showered on her by the Kurayevs, without the slightest effort of her own, completely changed her attitude towards Pavel's wedding. She went to see him, and, after first hauling him over the coals for having taken so commendable a step in secret, set about managing his affairs. She even went so far as to make up

with Feoktista Savvishna. The two women spent all their time going to each other's houses and to Pavel's house, where they shouted at his servants and marvelled at how swiftly the time was flying. On hearing from a third person that Pavel had unsuccessfully tried to borrow money, Perepetuya Petrovna took him to task again for neglecting her, and offered him three thousand rubles from her own coffers, not, of course, without taking from him a note-of-hand and stating the interest to be paid. Pavel revived. During all this time he had had no opportunity to think of his bride-to-be; day and night he rushed like a madman from one shop to another, carrying out the instructions issued every morning by Vladimir Andreich. Kurayev proved to be a ruthless taskmaster, either driving about himself, or dispatching Pavel, his wife, Nadya, the servants on all sorts of errands—and all for Pavel's sake; that is to say, all for Pavel's money. The one who took least part in all this was the bride-to-be. On rising in the morning she usually spent half an hour putting her hair in curl-papers, which did their work while she drank her coffee; towards one o'clock, having finished her toilet, she went into the drawing-room, to receive the congratulations of her friends, and greet her fiancé, who never stayed more than a few minutes; after dinner she retired to her room and did not appear again until summoned by her solicitous parents, who kept a sharp eye on her. Poor Julie! At the present moment she alone was going through tragedy; she alone suffered. All the others were happy, doing what they chose to do, and pleased with themselves. Vladimir Andreich was happy because he had arranged for his daughter's future, and successfully driven a fairly sharp bargain; he felt that he had overcome all obstacles by his strength of will, and charmed his son-in-law elect by his ready wit. Marya Ivanovna was happy because Vladimir Andreich was so engrossed in preparations for the wedding that he had no time to shout at her; sometimes, it is true, she felt

sorry for Julie, but on thinking it over she always came to the conclusion that even people who marry for love sometimes live like cats and dogs. Perepetuya Petrovna went about like a turkey-cock with all its feathers spread; she walked with her head held high, in stiffly starched skirts, and for some inexplicable reason took to speaking through her nose. The attentions of the Kurayevs gave her a great sense of importance. Later she was heard to say that the "crafty family" had cast such a spell over her that it never entered her head to ask her nephew about the bride's dowry. Feoktista Savvishna, too, was extremely happy. She talked to all and sundry about the wedding she had arranged at such length that she quite lost her voice. As for the fortunate fiancé, it goes without saying he was happy. Young, inexperienced, trustful, carried away by his first passion, Pavel believed he was about to plunge into a sea of bliss. He did not see, did not realize, that the very sight of him filled his betrothed with loathing. The cunning Vladimir Andreich kept assuring him that she was too modest ever to give expression to her feelings. Nadya was almost the only one to feel sympathy for Julie, but she, too, was often distracted by dreams of the coming ball or a promised new gown. Julie alone was always melancholy. Dear God, was this the match she had hoped to make! She had been sure she would marry an officer of the Guards who would carry her off to Petersburg, where she would stroll on his arm down the Nevsky Prospekt, grace the halls of high society, be presented at court, and become a lady-in-waiting. And what had bitter reality offered her in place of such luxurious dreams? The prospect of living all her life in a provincial town. Even this would not be so bad if the man she married had been rich and energetic, but to marry a simpleton with whom she was ashamed to be seen in public! And then there was her heart—the reader already knows that Julie's heart was not her own, that it belonged to the cruel but fascinating

Bakhtiarov. Such meditations made Julie hate her fiancé all the more. "The hideous creature! The simpleton!" she would hiss under her breath and burst into tears of despair. Fantastic plans for escaping this marriage presented themselves to her imagination; she would throw herself at her father's feet and beg him not to be the cause of her ruin. Or she would tell Pavel that she could not be his wife because she loved another and ask him to prove the true nobility of his nature by not demanding of her a sacrifice which might drive her into her grave. She actually thought of writing a letter to Bakhtiarov confessing her love and imploring him to save her from this terrible marriage, to take her away somewhere, to Paris, for instance. This idea pleased Julie most of all, but, partly from modesty, partly from vanity, she could not make up her mind to take such a reckless step. If Bakhtiarov appreciated her feelings, well and good, but if he mocked them, what then? And if her father found out? Julie could find only one consolation in her situation, and that was that at last she would escape from her parents' rule, she would be a married woman and could go wherever she liked unchaperoned.

The wedding honours were distributed in the following manner: Perepetuya Petrovna, notwithstanding her unmarried state, would not concede to anyone the honour of acting as the bridegroom's mother, insisting that at the ripe age of fifty a maid was as good as a wife. Vladimir Andreich sent to the country for a neighbour of the Beshmetevs (a man who could not without tears recall Pavel's father, his neighbour, friend and colleague), and asked him to act as father to the groom. Feoktista Savvishna was to be lady of honour, and Masurov, although nothing had been seen of him for some time and his promise to make the acquaintance of his future relatives had not been fulfilled, was nominated best man. On the bride's side were, of course, her mother and father. Her lady of honour was Baroness

Klukstock, who bore a strange resemblance to the queen of spades; Julie's cousin, generally known as Petrusha Maslyanikov, was to be her page. He bought a dozen pairs of gloves for the occasion and kept asking everybody what he was expected to do. At this point it is necessary to note that Vladimir Andreich (as he himself stated later) would have invited more important personages to take part in the ceremony if the groom's family had not been so plebeian; one couldn't mix two such different sets.

At last the day of the wedding arrived. Pavel woke up very early in a state of hysterics; he was gay and sad at once, he wanted to laugh and cry. His old mother, too, woke up early. Perepetuya Petrovna, with the aid of the serving-girls, finally got her to understand that Pavel was getting married and that the tall gentleman who had been to see her and kissed her hand would be his father-in-law. She wept. Pavel himself sobbed like a child. Perepetuya Petrovna and Feoktista Savvishna, who were present at this scene, also wept. The whole house seemed to be in tears, and Konstantin shed copious tears as he sewed braid on his new uniform in the servants' quarters, muttering to himself the while: "Off they go!" The wedding was to take place at four in the afternoon, after which the young couple were to go straight to the Kurayevs' and live there for a week, paying a call on Pavel's mother the day after the wedding. Soon after twelve o'clock Perepetuya Petrovna and Feoktista Savvishna went to their respective houses to attire themselves, being determined to be present at the wedding ceremony and go on to the Kurayevs', where a ball was to be given that same evening. Both ladies took the greatest pains over their toilet and both lost their tempers with their maids, the one because her lace cap was rumpled, the other because—not really because of anything but just to teach the girl a lesson. Pavel was completely distraught. He wandered as one in a trance from his mother's bedroom to his study and back again, stood

gazing for some fifteen minutes into the street, where there was nothing more interesting to be seen than a little boy splashing barefoot in the puddles. Leaving the window, he threw himself down on his bed, heaved a great sigh, then, locking the door, began to pray.

Two hours before the wedding he suddenly remembered he had not seen his best man, though he had sent him a note. It would be just like his absent-minded brother-in-law to forget all about it and not turn up! He sent the coachman for him. Fifteen minutes later the man returned and said he had searched the town and Masurov was nowhere to be found. What was to be done? Perepetuya Petrovna and Feoktista Savvishna arrived, the man who was to take the place of Pavel's father arrived—but still no sign of the best man. His aunt and the matchmaker were in despair. Perepetuya Petrovna, notwithstanding her devotion to Masurov, called him a rascal in the presence of a stranger, and the neighbour could do nothing but shrug his shoulders. But no more time could be lost; they must go to the church. Pavel, wearing a new dress-coat, a white piqué waistcoat and a white tie (which, by the way, did not suit him at all!), received the blessing first of his mother, then of his substitute father, finally of his aunt.

Again the weeping and wailing began. His old mother was in a deplorable state; tears flowed down the neighbour's cheeks as, recalling Vasily Petrovich, he blessed Pavel, kissed him, wished him happiness and a host of children, after which he took a pinch of snuff, glanced at the clock, and reached for his hat. Perepetuya Petrovna dried her tears with a batiste handkerchief and made the following speech:

"Well, Pavel Vasilich, may the Lord give you happiness, and may your future wife be a consolation to you and to all of us! Don't forget us when you're married! We're not strangers, but your own kith and kin. It's for you we live, so to speak; the married state is, indeed, a great and impor-

tant thing, I appreciate that even if I've never experienced it myself–it changes a man, even changes his way of thinking. Well, God bless you! It is time for us to be going."

Pavel flung on his coat and climbed into the waiting phaeton. The pair of blacks set off so suddenly that Konstantin almost lost his round hat, and they all moved in the direction of the church, neither quickly nor slowly, but in a manner befitting an upper-class wedding-procession.

In the house of the Kurayevs the scenes preceding the wedding were more solemn and seemly. Page Petrusha Maslyanikov had long been in the salon, where he was telling Baron Klukstock (husband of the lady of honour) that he had never taken part in a wedding ceremony before and that the only one he had ever attended was the marriage of his valet. The bride was being dressed. She was attended by the lady of honour, a second cousin of Vladimir Andreich who was piqued at not having been offered a part in the wedding ceremony, Nadya, who, as the bride's sister, was to give her her cross and earrings, and three young girls, two of whom were the daughters of Vladimir Andreich's second cousin. Julie was so drenched in tears that several times it had been necessary to pat her face with a wet towel and everybody told her her eyes would be as red as flame if she didn't stop crying.

Marya Ivanovna was sitting on the sofa in the drawing-room weeping and glancing from time to time at Vladimir Andreich, who paced up and down with his hands behind his back. The icons for blessing the happy pair were set out on the table. At last the bride was ready and everyone came into the drawing-room. Vladimir Andreich picked up one of the icons. Julie knelt at her father's feet. She was seized by such a fit of sobbing that she could not rise and had to be helped to her feet: this time everyone advised her to give way to her feelings. Kurayev himself shed a tear as he kissed his daughter. Marya Ivanovna became hysterical and was unable to give her daughter her bless-

ing. The bride was led away and seated in the carriage beside the lady of honour. The page rode off in a brougham; Baron Klukstock drove with the second cousin of Vladimir Andreich; the young girls were put into a separate carriage. They were longing to see the wreath put on the bride's head, but since they were not part of the wedding procession they were only expected to come later. Vladimir Andreich and Marya Ivanovna remained at home according to the established custom. The ceremony ran its natural course. The church was packed, and a crowd pressed round the doors trying to get in. Every now and then the local constable was forced to resort to stringent measures. Before the bride arrived he had had to administer chastisement to a creature in a frieze overcoat, who tried to push his way into the church, to lay violent hands on a loud-mouthed baggage whom he pushed out bodily, and to tweak the hair of a sooty-faced urchin who (thought the constable) looked for all the world like the devil himself. Throughout the ceremony the bride and groom did not once look at each other. Certain of the onlookers were heard to observe that the groom had a big nose and a flat face and the bride was a great deal better-looking. One of the schoolboys in the crowd called Perepetuya Petrovna a melon. The lady of honour, Baroness Klukstock, held a long and serious conversation with Feoktista Savvishna about the failure of the best man to appear.

At last the young couple returned home and were met by Vladimir Andreich and Marya Ivanovna. Accompanied by all the members of the wedding procession, they entered the salon, where again they received a blessing.

"My children," began Vladimir Andreich, in an impressive voice, "allow me on so important an occasion to make a short speech." As he uttered these words Vladimir Andreich took a small notebook out of his side pocket. Kurayev's intention was considered by all present to be

somewhat unusual, and a few even exchanged meaning looks.

"Today, my children," said Vladimir Andreich, "you have embarked upon a new life and assumed new responsibilities. Some accept these responsibilities easily and joyfully, others find the marriage bond more irksome than a convict's fetters. What is the cause of this? We ourselves are the cause. Husbands wish to assert too much authority, wives are unwilling to submit. Take as your example a pair of doves: these feathered creatures offer a model for human beings. They sincerely love one another. The male is tender and industrious and solicitous of his family; the female is gentle and submissive to her mate. Be as the doves, my children, and you will be happy! You, Pavel Vasilich, are tearing away from us the most tender part of our hearts; you are taking our pure sweet dove away from us, and it is your sacred duty to take our place in her life as far as possible, to console her and drive away the loneliness that she may feel on first finding herself away from her parents' nest. Some day you yourself may be a father, and then you will realize what we are suffering at this moment. It is, mayhap, but the demands of decorum that stem the tears ready to flow at the prospect of sending forth our beloved child to live among strangers. Once more, my children, accept my blessing."

With these words Vladimir Andreich nimbly slipped his notebook back into his pocket and, bowing, raised his hands over the young couple in benediction.

"Excellent speech!" said the page to Baron Klukstock.

The Baron compressed his lips without a word.

The guests now proceeded to the drawing-room, where tea was served. The bride was led away to change from her wedding-gown into an evening one. At eight o'clock the musicians arrived and the guests began to gather.

That vain man Vladimir Andreich had been unable to resist inviting some members of his own set to the eve-

ning celebration, and for the sake of the dancing a number of young people had also been invited, among them Bakhtiarov. The bride did not put in an appearance for some time. Pavel felt vastly uncomfortable; he was aware of the sidelong glances the women cast at him, and of the ambiguous remarks made by certain male guests who hardly knew him as to the bliss in store for him. Perepetuya Petrovna was vexed because she felt Vladimir Andreich had not shown her the honours due to one who fulfilled the role of mother to the groom; on entering the drawing-room it was not she he had invited to sit on the sofa, but Baroness Klukstock. Marya Ivanovna, too, instead of attending upon her, sat down next to Vladimir Andreich's second cousin, who occupied the other end of the sofa. Perepetuya Petrovna was, in this way, almost forced to take the last armchair, a humiliation she avoided by taking a seat at the window.

At last the bride returned and her appearance was soon followed by that of Marya Nikolayevna, a lady who owned an estate of three thousand serfs. There were already a sufficient number of dancing partners. The only representative of the younger set who had been invited and had not come was Bakhtiarov. Vladimir Andreich made a sign to the musicians, who struck up a polka.

"Will you be so good as to open the ball?" said Kurayev to his son-in-law.

Poor Pavel was dumbfounded. He did not even know what dance was being played. There he stood without so much as taking the hand of his bride, who had been standing beside him for some time. Guessing what the trouble was, Julie made a little face, took his arm, and led him into the salon.

"I suppose you don't know how to dance?" she said in a low voice.

Pavel blushed with shame.

"I . . . er . . . no—that is, it's been so long since I took lessons. . . ."

"Then tell Papa you've hurt your leg; it would be awful to get all tangled up in the middle of the floor."

The young folk were followed by Vladimir Andreich and Marya Nikolayevna. Perepetuya Petrovna took this as a mortal insult; she had been sure he would invite her to dance the polka.

"This is no wedding party, it's just an ordinary ball," she said to Feoktista Savvishna, as the latter walked past her.

"What d'you mean?"

"What I say. They have no time for you and me; they're too busy with more important people."

I cannot say what Feoktista Savvishna would have replied to this had not Marya Ivanovna called her at this moment.

When the polka was over Julie went up to her father.

"He simply doesn't know how to dance, Papa."

"Who?"

"Beshmetev."

"Impossible! He'll be all right when we start the French dances."

"French dances indeed! He can't even dance a polka. I won't dance with him for anything! I've already told him to say he's hurt his leg."

Vladimir Andreich waved his hand, as much as to say: "Have it your own way."

"What a pity!" he said a little later as he went into the drawing-room. "Our young man can't dance; he hurt his leg yesterday jumping out of his carriage. Pavel Vasilich!" he called to Beshmetev, who was standing at the other end of the room, "does your leg still give you pain?"

"It does," said Pavel.

"A great pity, but it can't be helped. Stand in the doorway and watch your wife make eyes at other men; that

will soon teach you the joys of being a husband. Oh, never fear, you'll get used to it!"

Vladimir Andreich said this in a rather loud voice, so that most of the gentlemen and many of the ladies heard him. A French quadrille was begun and the bride danced with the page.

In the middle of the next quadrille Bakhtiarov entered the salon, looking younger and handsomer than ever. His face was more than usually pale. He went straight up to the bride and congratulated her, then he congratulated Vladimir Andreich who came forward to meet him, and bowed to Pavel, after which he retired to the window and assumed his usual aloof pose, declaring to his host that he would not dance. The bride, though disconcerted and unhappy, noticed that Bakhtiarov was pale and seemed to be out of sorts; she had overheard his refusal to dance, and interpreted all these symptoms in her own favour. "He must be in love with me," she thought. "The news of my marriage has made him suffer and that is why he is so pale and out of spirits." She was glad of it and made up her mind to start teasing him this very evening. When the quadrille was over she joined Pavel, who was sitting not far from Bakhtiarov.

"What a pity you don't dance, Paul! You are the only one I care to dance with!"

Pavel quickly sprang to his feet, the tears coming into his eyes, so flattered and embarrassed was he by this unexpected compliment. Julie Vladimirovna held out her hand to him. He almost forgot that he was expected to kiss it.

Again the dancing began. Bakhtiarov did not dance. In the hope of driving the provincial lion to distraction Julie pretended to be gay and happy and several times addressed Pavel in endearing terms. But Bakhtiarov soon went away and she relapsed into a thoughtful, melancholy mood, no longer paying the slightest attention to her husband. Pavel remained standing in the doorway with

his eyes fixed on his wife. Nadya was flirting with a young official who displayed uncommon dexterity in the waltz. Perepetuya Petrovna was beside herself with indignation: her host had not even invited her to the card-table! Vladimir Andreich was completely taken up by the bigwigs of the gubernia and Marya Ivanovna kept fluttering round the lady with the three thousand serfs.

At the supper table Perepetuya Petrovna's position became so intolerable that she was only kept from bursting into tears by her pride. Not only had she been denied the seat of honour rightfully hers as acting-mother of the groom, but she was starved like a dog and partook of nothing but a glass of kvass. The reason for this was that, though the wedding had fallen on a fast-day, the hosts had not even taken the trouble to find out if there were not some among their guests who did not eat meat. What did they take her for, a mere priest's wife? She was a gentlewoman, she'd have them know, and a person of honour at this wedding feast! For her sake at least they might have provided appropriate viands. Of course she wouldn't expect them to take a nobody like Feoktista Savvishna into account: serve that woman roast goat on Good Friday and she'd gobble it up! But to think of putting Perepetuya Petrovna in such a position—as if there was a curse on her! There was nothing on the table she could touch. Surely they didn't expect her to break her fast for the occasion? To say nothing of the sin of it, there were people present who knew very well she observed all the fast days. They were just making a laughing-stock of her. These were the thoughts that thronged Perepetuya Petrovna's mind as she sat at table; her indignation grew with the appearance of every new dish, she hardly managed to remark that she was not eating anything—her hosts appeared not to have noticed it. The bride was white-faced and refused all food. Pavel, too, sat with downcast eyes and ate nothing.

"Look, they've lost their appetites!" remarked a young officer to his neighbour—the young man with a resolute air whose acquaintance we have already made at the assembly.

The resolute young man (who wore his hair in the style called *à la diable m'emporte!*) made a face, exclaimed, "Nonsense!" and gulped down a whole glass of red wine. When dinner was over the guests went home, leaving only the participants in the wedding ceremony. The young couple were accompanied to their bedchamber with due solemnity. Everything might be said to have gone off without a hitch but for Perepetuya Petrovna's parting sally to Vladimir Andreich:

"Allow me to thank you for your food and hospitality," she said on taking leave of her hosts. "I may not be rich, but I know a thing or two and shall do my best to repay you in kind." So saying, she made her bow and went into the cloak-room.

On the next day the following conversation took place in the Kurayevs' house between the housekeeper, who had won the confidence of her master and mistress by fifteen years of telling tales on her fellow-servants, and a lady of her acquaintance, a shopkeeper.

"Well, Marya Maximovna, Ma'am, and what is the young master like?"

"He's a quiet one, Fedotovna, no match for our young lady if I do say so. What she needs is a master with a strong hand, one as could give her a nip or tweak from time to time. She'll twist this one round her little finger."

"Will she now?" asked the shopkeeper in tones of profound significance.

XII

DOMESTIC SCENES

More than six months have passed since Pavel's wedding day. Winter has come, bringing the usual round of pleasures. Nothing of moment has occurred in the town,

nor has any significant change taken place in the lives of my characters. Pavel is living with his wife and his mother. Kurayev has not yet left for Petersburg because his friends have not yet found him that private post. Lizaveta Vasilyevna has been in the country all this time. Perepetuya Petrovna has broken off all relations with her nephew and has not even seen her beloved sister for three months. There is no denying she has some grounds for being displeased with the Beshmetevs. In the first place, if the reader remembers Vladimir Andreich's conduct at the wedding, he cannot but agree that it was inexcusable. In the second place, in paying their calls the young couple first made the rounds of all their important acquaintances, appearing at Perepetuya Petrovna's only after dinner on the following day, and when she rebuked them for this, her lout of a nephew sat there mum as usual and her new niece had the impudence to turn up her nose. "If you don't like the way we make our calls we won't come any more!" she piped, and ever since had done nothing but snub Perepetuya Petrovna. Far be it from Perepetuya Petrovna to go cringing and fawning! Not she! She simply severed all relations with the ingrates, actually sueing Pavel for payment of his note-of-hand. But the poor woman suffers from the rupture with her sister and sends Palasha every day to inquire after her health and at the same time to find out how the young couple are getting on. Palasha usually replies to Perepetuya Petrovna's questions by saying: "All is well, praise the Lord!" and then proceeds to relate what she has been able to discover. From Palasha's reports Perepetuya Petrovna has learned that to this day Vladimir Andreich has not given a kopek with his daughter, that her entire dowry consisted of Spiridon Spiridonych, who is incapable of doing anything but dust the furniture and polish the candlesticks, most of his time being spent lying on the stove-ledge, though this does not prevent him from bragging insufferably. The bride had

brought with her hardly any trousseau–only four silk dresses and a scanty supply of underwear. She took no part in the housekeeping, even the meals were ordered by Pavel, Julie doing nothing but order new clothes. A few days ago she paid three hundred rubles to the seamstress. The husband and wife were known to occupy separate rooms; Julie Vladimirovna had taken Pavel's study for herself and draped the windows in the thinnest of gauze curtains; Pavel slept on a sofa in the corner room and his bedclothes were put away in the day-time. They entertained many guests, foremost among whom was Bakhtiarov, and often went visiting. If Pavel Vasilich ever objected, Julie Vladimirovna would shout at him and weep and go into hysterics. On hearing these tales Perepetuya Petrovna usually said: "Serves him right, the puppy! Next thing she'll be slapping his face! Things would have been very different if he had shown more respect for his relatives."

On New Year's Eve Pavel was sitting in his mother's bedchamber. The old woman had been growing noticeably weaker during the autumn, and on this day she had had another stroke. The doctor was sent for, and after prescribing about a dozen mustard plasters, promised to call again in the evening. It was clear that he feared for the life of his patient, who was unconscious and recognized no one. Pavel had let Perepetuya Petrovna know of this, and sent one of his servants for his sister. Despite his mother's state, Julie Vladimirovna was not at home, she was at the dressmaker's trying on the new gown she was to appear in at the Assembly of the Nobility. Pavel was pale and thin. Obviously what should have been the halcyon days of married life had not passed too happily for him. He sat by the sick woman's bed holding her hand; Marfa, the housekeeper, stood at the foot of the bed sighing and sniffing; a young serving-maid with her face and hands smeared with mustard was preparing a fresh plas-

ter. At this moment Julie Vladimirovna came home accompanied by a girl from the shop, carefully carrying the new gown. First Julie went to her own room, or, as she called it, her boudoir, to try on the gown once more. It fitted perfectly. For half an hour or so she stood admiring herself in the looking-glass, first from the front, then from one side, then from the other, then with bent head to get a glimpse of the ornament in her hair, then sitting down to see how the gown looked when she was seated. The effect was splendid. At last Julie Vladimirovna took it off and went into the sick woman's room.

"Why aren't you getting dressed? You haven't even shaved yet," she said without so much as greeting her husband.

"I can't go tonight, Julie," said Pavel.

"Excellent! Wonderful!" cried Julie, her voice harshly resonant. "And why have I had a new gown made? So that you could mock me?"

"Can't you see? Mother is dying."

"A fine excuse! In the first place, she's not dying, she's just as she has been for a long time, and in the second place, what good can you do her by sitting here?"

"Say what you like, I am not in a state to go."

"Do you really mean that?"

"You know I always accompany you if I can."

"No evasions! Do you really mean you do not intend to go?"

"I cannot go."

"Very good! Excellent! Do you mean to frighten me? Oh, I'm horribly frightened! I'll go alone."

Pavel said nothing.

"I'll go by all means. You knew how badly I wanted to go and made up an excuse on purpose."

"You can see the excuse with your own eyes, Julie."

"I see no excuse at all, nothing but your imagination. I'll go all by myself."

So saying, Julie flounced out and went into the corner room, where she sat down on the sofa and sulked. A few minutes later she began to weep softly, then burst into loud sobs. Pavel heard the sound and realized it was his wife weeping. His first impulse was to go to her, but he checked it and sat down again. The sobbing continued. My hero's soft heart could not withstand this. He went into the corner room and stood looking at his wife for a few moments. When she heard him come in, Julie's sobs increased.

"Why are you crying?" he asked.

"You're always doing things to spite me!" said Julie through her tears. "If I'd known, I'd have asked Papa to take me. How can I go alone? Why did I have that new gown made? You're always making some stupid excuse! I'm not a servant, to have you mock me! You allowed me to make preparations all the morning and when the time comes to go—you sit at home!"

"How unfeeling you are!"

"It's you who are unfeeling!"

Pavel smiled and sat down beside her, but Julie moved to the other end of the sofa.

"Don't dare sit beside me, you ungrateful wretch! What did you tell me last night?"

"And I'd tell you the same thing now."

"A lot I need your empty words! 'I'd willingly die for you,' says he, but he can't so much as take me to a ball."

"You are unjust! What if my mother were to die while we are at the ball? What would people say then? How can we dance and enjoy ourselves at such a time?"

"Hear him! Why not? Perhaps you'd like us to sit and weep? Go away, I can't bear the sight of you! God has certainly punished me all right, thanks to my dear father. Nadya is, probably, dressed by this time." With these words Julie's tears again began to flow and she threw herself on the cushions.

"This is absurd, Julie; you're acting like a child," said Pavel, once more approaching his wife.

"Go away!" cried Julie, giving him a push and continuing to cry.

Pavel felt sorry for his wife; he was beginning to waver.

"Don't cry, Julie, I'll go," he said.

But Julie did not stop crying.

"I'll go, I tell you! I'll shave this minute. Look! I'm off to shave," he said, and really did go out into the salon.

When he had gone Julie got up and wiped her eyes.

"The fool!" she said to herself, glancing into the mirror. "Now I'll be going to the ball with red eyes—a pretty sight!"

Husband and wife began dressing. Pavel was ready in fifteen minutes and, while waiting for his wife, went into his mother's room, where he sat down beside her bed, lost in thought. Presently he heard the footsteps and voice of Perepetuya Petrovna. His heart sank; he had a foreboding that there would be a scene, his aunt would be sure to protest against their going.

"Gracious heavens, what's all this?" said Perepetuya Petrovna as she came panting into the room without taking any notice of Pavel. "Dear God, she's dying! Sister, darling Sister! Lord, what a fever she's in! Has the doctor been?"

"Yes, Aunt," said Pavel.

This drew Perepetuya Petrovna's attention to her nephew.

"Well, Sir, so this is what you've brought your poor mother to, is it? At last you've got what you wanted, have you? See what a dandy he is! What's the occasion of all the finery? Your mother's decease?"

Pavel dared not tell his aunt he was going to the assembly, but Perepetuya Petrovna guessed.

"Are they going to celebrate his mother's death by going to a ball?" she asked, turning to the housekeeper.

Marfa made no reply.

"Are you going to a ball, you and your wife?" she repeated, this time to Pavel.

"We've been invited to the Assembly of the Nobility."

"Are you crazy, Pavel Vasilich? Have you and that better half of yours gone quite out of your minds? Holy Virgin! But I'll not allow you to do such a thing, I'll not allow you to disgrace the family! Be so good as to take off those clothes and stay here with your mother, and forbid your wife to go, too. Who ever heard of such a thing? He'll be inviting Gypsies to dance at his mother's funeral next! And have you nothing better to do, Sir, than go to balls? You'll be in the poor-house before you know it, at this rate! Or, perhaps, your wife brought you a fortune? I daresay one fist would hold all the dowry she brought you. Don't dare think of going, Sir!"

Just then a moan came from the bed.

"My love! My darling! You, too, suffer! How can you help suffering at the sight of such heartlessness and ingratitude? I feel a pang at my heart, but what is my state compared with yours?"

At that moment Julie came in attired for the ball. On catching sight of Pavel's aunt she frowned and turned to her husband without so much as bowing to her.

"Come on, it's high time for us to be going," she said.

Pavel was at a loss what to do. Perepetuya Petrovna flushed to the roots of her hair.

"It is *not* high time, and cannot possibly be high time, for the simple reason that his mother is dying."

Julie made a face and continued working down the fingers of her French gloves.

"Order the horses," she said to the maid standing by.

"Order the horses to be unharnessed!" said Perepetuya Petrovna, getting up in a rage. "Pavel Vasilich! Why are you silent, Sir? Order the horses to be unharnessed this

instant! Remain at home yourself and keep *her* at home! She dare not go against your wishes!"

Julie glanced at Perepetuya Petrovna and burst into the most insulting laughter.

"Has your aunt gone crazy?" she said to Pavel.

Perepetuya Petrovna, who was not always too tactful in her own manner of address, could not bear insolence from others.

"No, Ma'am, his aunt has not gone crazy, it's you and that husband of yours who have gone crazy! How dare you say such a thing to me? I'm a gentlewoman I'll have you know, which is more than can be said of you! *I'm* not the one who got married with nothing but a shift to my back, *I* don't try to order my husband about! And you're greatly mistaken if you think I'll let you make a laughing-stock of my family, after we took pity on you, beggar that you are! How dare you say such a thing to me! And don't dare go to that ball! D'you hear me, Pavel? Don't dare! A fine commander you've found! Is it many horses you've added to this household, my fine lady? Not so much as a single toothless old hack! And the airs she puts on! You ought to thank the Lord you've got food and a roof over your head, but no...."

At first Julie listened with a supercilious smile on her lips; slowly this turned into a wry grimace, and at Perepetuya Petrovna's last words, unable to bear it any longer, she cried out, "You old fool!" and ran to the corner room, where she collapsed in an armchair, her body arched, and burst into sobs. Pavel rushed out of the room after her and even fell on his knees before her, but she gave him such a push that he could hardly maintain his balance. From the doorway Perepetuya Petrovna shouted:

"That's it, down on your knees, Sir! All the better to have your face slapped! Or, perhaps, to get a kick in the mouth! Just the thing for the likes of you!"

"O-o-o! I'm dying!" wailed Julie.

The sick woman, disturbed by the noise, gave a moan. Pavel was really like a madman: in a sort of daze he rushed back to his mother's room and took his former seat by her side.

To add a final touch to this dramatic scene, Mikhailo Nikolaich Masurov put in an appearance at this point. He was streaked with chalk, his hair was in disorder, his shirt-front sticking out. He came in with his usual rapid stride and the first thing he saw Julie lying on the sofa.

"What's the matter?" he asked. "Has mother died? Julie Vladimirovna! Julie Vladimirovna! What's the matter with you?"

From there he went into the sick woman's chamber, where he found Pavel sitting with his head in his hands. Meanwhile, Perepetuya Petrovna had gone to the quarters of the female servants, where she denounced their young mistress in the strongest possible terms and strictly forbade them to wait upon her. She also ordered the horses to be put up.

"What's happened?" cried Masurov. "Has everybody been poisoned by charcoal fumes? Mother seems to be alive, she's still breathing. Pavel Vasilich! Come, Brother, what is going on here?"

"Save my wife, she's dying!" murmured Pavel. "For God's sake, save my wife!"

Masurov shrugged his shoulders and went back to Julie.

"They must have been asphyxiated! Perhaps that's why the old lady's in such a bad way."

Julie was still lying on the sofa with her eyes closed, whimpering and trembling all over; big tears were rolling down her cheeks.

"Sister! Julie Vladimirovna! Get up and stop crying. What's the matter? Don't strain your muscles so—you'll break your neck. Here, let me at least unfasten your gown, and what a lovely gown it is! Evidently meant for a ball!"

Masurov stood looking down at his sister-in-law.

"Blessed if I know what I am to do with her," he murmured. "Ought one to sprinkle water on her face? Supposing she dies? Nobody to be seen, deuce take it!"

So saying, he went into the salon and from there into the footmen's room, but none of the servants were to be seen. What was he to do? Going out into the yard, he picked up a handful of snow, came back to the patient, and began rubbing her head, face, and even her breast with it. Julie shivered, sneezed, opened her eyes, and slowly rose from the sofa. Pavel, who was peeping through the door, watching the whole procedure, had been inclined to put a stop to it at first, but on seeing his wife come to, he crossed himself and went back to his seat. Julie had now quite recovered her senses, and drew one hand across her forehead as if trying to recall what had happened.

"Greetings, Sister! What's the trouble with you? I thought you had given up the ghost!"

"Order the horses," she said. "I cannot stay in this house another minute. Before you know it they'll be beating me! Quick, the horses! They're harnessed."

Masurov went out, but soon returned.

"The horses have been put up," he said.

Julie shrugged her shoulders.

"Did you come in a carriage? Let me use your carriage."

"I came in a cab, *ma soeur*."

"That will do. Pray help me to the door."

"But what about Pavel Vasilich, Sister? We must tell him. He will be worried."

"Let him worry about that hateful aunt of his! Fetch my mantle, it's hanging in the cloak-room."

Masurov complied with her wishes, and Julie drove off.

"Where has Julie gone?" asked Pavel, coming out to Masurov.

"She didn't say, exactly. We'll find out from the cabby when he comes back. What's the matter?"

Pavel heaved a deep sigh but was unable to say a word. Perepetuya Petrovna came in and told Masurov what had happened.

On his return the driver informed them that Julie had gone to her father's house. Masurov remained with his brother-in-law another half hour and did what he could to calm him and his aunt. He told Pavel not to worry, that in the first year of his own married life Liza had fainted every day, that marriage seems to make young girls particularly sensitive and irritable at first, one must simply not pay too much attention or attach too much importance to it. He listened attentively to Perepetuya Petrovna's thrice repeated account of her niece's wicked conduct and quite agreed with her that Julie did not deserve to be called a gentlewoman; then, explaining that he had a game of boston to finish, he left them. Perepetuya Petrovna remained with her sister, saying that she intended to spend the night and the whole of the next day with her even if her niece should burst with rage, since for her, Perepetuya Petrovna, the duty of a sister was to be considered above all others.

While all this was going on, Vladimir Andreich was at home seeing the New Year in all by himself. He had had a slight attack of gout and was afraid it would get worse if he went out in the cold. Not wishing to make his family suffer on his account, he had sent Marya Ivanovna and Nadya to the Assembly of the Nobility. He was in the best of spirits. Only that morning he had received a letter from Petersburg informing him that at last a post had been secured for him, and he was engaged in calculating his resources. He intended to give up altogether the estate mortgaged in the Court of Chancery; his debts were all small ones for which he had given unofficial promissory notes, so that he had nothing to fear in this respect. He would sell his house, carriages, horses, furniture, and all his household goods, for which he would get something like fifteen thousand rubles–more than enough to cover the ex-

penses of moving to Petersburg and taking the first steps in establishing a household there. As soon as he got to Petersburg he would arrange a marriage for Nadya, and after that he would give Marya Ivanovna no more than two thousand for all expenses, leaving another two thousand for his own pleasure. Not bad, not bad at all!

It was at this point in his meditations that Julie came in.

"You? What has brought you here? And in a ball gown? Why aren't you at the ball?"

Julie kissed her father without a word, threw herself into an armchair, and covered her eyes with her handkerchief.

"What's the matter, Julie?" asked Vladimir Andreich, surprised and somewhat alarmed.

"I can't go on living with him, Papa!"

"With whom?"

"With my husband. They shouted at me, insulted me . . . turned me out. . . ."

Vladimir Andreich was greatly troubled.

"Who shouted at you? Who turned you out?"

"He and that horrid aunt of his. She called me a beggar, says I eat their bread. Oh, it's terrible, Papa!"

As she said this Julie burst into tears.

"I can't understand a word you're saying! Stop crying and tell me what has happened."

"This morning. . . ."

"Well?"

"This morning I began making preparations for the ball . . . he didn't say anything . . . intended to go. . . ."

"Go on."

"And after dinner I went for my dress and when I got back everything was altered. 'I can't go,' says he, 'my mother's dying.' But she's been dying every day for ever so long."

"True enough, the old lady's half dead—high time she was resting in the Elysian fields. Well, go on!"

"I tried to show him he was wrong, that I'd had a new gown made and all that; things seemed to be smoothed over, he agreed to go with me, saw I was right. We were just going when who should arrive but that fat cow of a Perepetuya Petrovna, and how she did go for me! I'm sure you never spoke to a servant the way she spoke to me, Papa! I can't bear to think of the things she said! Fancy my having to listen to them, and me so proud!"

"And how did he take it?"

"He? As if you didn't know him, Papa! The simpleton! He's stupid, you know. I can't understand why you don't realize it."

Vladimir Andreich began pacing the floor, deep in thought.

"In the first place, they didn't turn you out; that fool of a Perepetuya Petrovna only lashed out at you with her tongue. Why didn't you give her tit-for-tat?"

"I don't know how to, Papa. I just called her an old fool and then I felt a spasm in my throat and had the usual fit of hysterics."

Again Vladimir Andreich, lost in thought, measured the room with big strides.

"This is all nonsense," he said after a long pause. "I'll send for him and give him such a talking-to that he won't let that fool of an aunt dictate to his wife again in a hurry."

"Do send for him, Papa, and make him promise never to let that horrid woman in the house again."

Vladimir Andreich sat down and wrote his son-in-law the following note:

"Pavel Vasilich,

"I humbly beg you to come and see me at once; there is something we must talk over. I trust you will comply with my request.

"With best wishes,

"Yours," etc.

"You write to him too, Julie," said Kurayev, handing his daughter the note.

Julie wrote:

"Pavel,

"Come and see Papa this very minute! If you don't you'll never set eyes on me again!"

A man was sent with the letters.

"Have you anything to live on? Have you any money?" asked Kurayev.

"Money? We borrowed five hundred rubles the other day and have only two hundred left. Persuade him to take a post—he doesn't want to."

"Why not?"

"Because he wants to go to Moscow; says they'll make him a professor in Moscow. Stuff and nonsense if you ask me. What does he know?"

"Did they really promise to make him a professor?"

"I don't know. Talk to him, we won't have a kopek to live on soon."

"Talk to him, talk to him! You shouldn't have been so weak! He's an amenable person—soft as wax, you can do whatever you like with him. Why did you have to make such a fuss tonight? D'you think it's so pleasant for me to have to interfere? If force won't get you anywhere, you must use love and gentle persuasion, but no—this young lady must have her own way this very instant! Why couldn't you have stayed at home and not gone to the ball if his mother is really dying? Is it so important?"

Julie listened sulkily to what her father was saying.

Just then Pavel came in.

"What's all this I hear? Come, sit down over here," said Vladimir Andreich quite amiably.

Pavel sat down without daring to glance at his wife.

"Pavel Vasilich," began Kurayev, "I must ask you to for-

bid your aunt to make such scenes in your house. Who ever heard of such a thing? Respectable, educated, upper-class people squabbling and wrangling like fishwives! It's disgusting! A girl of my daughter's upbringing not only has never been subjected to such treatment herself, she has never even seen or heard anything of the sort; she was incapable of repeating all the odious expressions used; she just couldn't utter them. It goes without saying that all this comes of Perepetuya Petrovna's ill-breeding, but it is your duty to curb her. You, it seems, are a man of education. If she disapproves, let her stay at home. What need have you of her?"

"She came to see my mother."

"Excellent. Then let her sit with your mother. What business is it of hers what you do? Why should she interfere in your affairs? In this age of enlightenment even fathers decline to interfere in the affairs of their children after they're married. Take me, for instance, have I in the slightest way intruded on you? Have I allowed myself to say a single insulting word to you? You are polite and I am even more polite, and so it should be."

Pavel sat with downcast eyes, evidently in complete agreement with what Vladimir Andreich was saying, for he knew himself that Perepetuya Petrovna had no business to interfere in their affairs.

"And what about your mother—is she very bad?"

"Very. The doctor has just been—he bled her."

"By the way, there's a thing I've been wanting to speak to you about for some time," said Vladimir Andreich. "What are you thinking of doing? Why don't you enter the government service?"

The question embarrassed Pavel.

"I am studying for a bachelor's degree."

"Ah, so you are studying? Reviewing what you have already learned, or entering upon new fields?"

"He's not doing anything," said Julie.

"Not yet, but I intend to study," said Pavel, completely overcome.

Not since the day of his wedding, or rather, since the day of his betrothal, had he held a book in his hands. At first, as we have seen, he was taken up with preparations for the wedding and his dreams of a blissful future, and later . . . later . . . we shall see what occupied the mind and heart of my hero later.

"What conclusions am I to draw from your words?" argued Vladimir Andreich. "You have not yet begun to study, though there has been a great lapse of time; accordingly I assume you will have difficulty in passing your examination. I judge by my own experience—I received my first ranks by passing examinations too, so I know how hard it is. Let us suppose that you pass your examination; what then?"

"I hope to be given a professorship."

"How is that? You mean they will make you a professor as soon as you pass your examination?"

"Not immediately . . . but I have great hopes."

"Nonsense! Sheer daydreaming! That's not the way to look at life, Pavel Vasilich; life's a serious business; 'A bird in the hand's worth two in the bush,' you know. Enough of your dreaming, Sir. Get yourself a post. And there's no time to be lost, you're a married man now. Ah, twelve o'clock! Allow me to congratulate you on the advent of the New Year. Boy! Bring a bottle of champagne! There's reality for you: in comes the New Year and demands a bottle of champagne—at twelve rubles per bottle! There's reality for you!"

The bottle of champagne was brought in. Vladimir Andreich poured out a wine-glass for his daughter and a tumbler for himself and Pavel, and then, in a sudden access of spirits, replenished all the glasses.

"Now make it up and see that you don't have any more quarrels. You must love each other. Julie, kiss your hus-

band—come, put some spirit into it to gladden your old father's heart!"

Julie went up to her husband and kissed him reluctantly. But the wine had affected my poor Pavel so powerfully that he seized his wife and began embracing her ardently. In vain did she push him away, in vain did she make a wry face—he held on to her and kissed her face, her throat, her breast....

"Bravo! Well done!" said the old man. "Here, have another glass, and you too, Julie! Here's to you!"

Pavel did not wait to be asked a second time; he swallowed the wine in a single gulp and became positively garrulous.

"God knows, Sir, I'll do whatever you say! Ask me anything you like! I would lay down my life for Julie! I adore you, Julie!"

"Where's your aunt?"

"At our house."

"I won't go home if your aunt is there, Pavel," declared Julie.

"I'll put her out, I'll throw her out if you want me to."

"That is hardly necessary," observed Vladimir Andreich. "Write her a note from here requesting her to leave your house."

"I'll write twenty notes," said Pavel.

"Good!" said Vladimir Andreich. "Here's some paper."

Pavel tried to write, but came to a stop after inditing the words: "Respected Perepetuya Petrovna."

"Allow me to dictate the letter to you," said Vladimir Andreich.

"Be so kind!"

Kurayev began:

"Your recent behaviour, which is quite beyond the limit of decency, has placed me under the necessity of requesting you to quit my house instantly. If you refuse

to comply with my request neither my wife nor I will be able to return home for fear of being exposed to one of those scandalous scenes so repugnant to any cultivated person."

Pavel wrote to his dictation; and immediately dispatched the note to his house. He stayed with his father-in-law for another two hours, during which they finished off the bottle. In a fit of tenderness he promised Vladimir Andreich to give up all thought of a professorship and begin looking for a post the very next day. The messenger soon came back with the information that Perepetuya Petrovna had left the house as soon as she received it.

On the way home Pavel, with an unwonted display of courage, clasped his wife round the waist and kissed her over and over again.

"Do ask Bakhtiarov to stay to dinner with us tomorrow;" pleaded Julie. "He's so nice and he's terribly fond of you."

"Of course, of course, my love! There's nothing I wouldn't do for your sake, although this. . . ."

"Although, what?"

"Nothing in particular . . . but . . . it *is* a little hard on me. . . ."

"What nonsense!"

On reaching home they found the priest, who had just administered the last rites.

XIII

ABOUT THIS AND THAT

Pavel's mother was no more. Her death did not make the impression on Pavel that might have been expected, considering how sincerely he had loved her. My hero was too much concerned with his own affairs, his own hard and joyless fate. Despite his lack of experience he had

soon (all too soon!) realized that his wife did not love him, that she had accepted him simply to get married or, perhaps, because she had been forced to. Pavel cursed his folly for not having taken the precaution of ascertaining Julie's true feelings before marriage. What would now be my best expedient? he asked himself. I will endeavour to make her love me, by satisfying her every wish and whim, her every caprice. I will do everything possible to make her understand me. After having come to this decision he woke up every morning with the firm determination of telling his wife how he loved her and how he suffered from her coldness. He would show her that husband and wife cannot go on living like this, would ask her to make an effort to care for him. But far from pouring out his heart, my hero was never able even to broach the subject to her. Julie was always busy—now it was her toilet that she was occupied with, now she had guests to entertain, another time she must prepare for a ball, or was simply fretful and out of spirits. Not more than two or three times since their marriage had she shown her husband any attention or spoken kindly to him. Whenever she did, the overjoyed Beshmetev instantly attempted to unburden his heart to her, but Julie heard him listlessly, invariably interrupting by asking him to give her some money or introduce her to some young man who had recently arrived.

Thus the days went by. Pavel, like a timid suitor, was alive to his wife's every word, movement, and glance, endeavouring to interpret them in his favour. She seems to be getting fond of me, she is beginning to love me, he would say to himself, but the next instant Julie would do something showing clearly not only that she did not love him, but that she did not even respect him.

But this was not the whole of Pavel's troubles: he had already begun to be jealous of a certain dangerous gentleman, one who was a perpetual menace to the married happiness of so many husbands in the gubernia—namely,

Bakhtiarov. This local lion was a fairly frequent guest at their house, but his purpose in coming was hard to discover, for he never showed Julie more than the most ordinary courtesy; whereas she received him with a great deal more than ordinary cordiality. She made no attempt to conceal her eagerness whenever he was expected, listened with bated breath when he spoke, urged him to stay when he rose to take his leave, and showed jealousy when he was attentive to any other woman. In his absence she sought opportunities to talk about him, going into raptures over his appearance or some anecdote he had told.

But a short time before the death of Pavel's mother, Bakhtiarov had begun to show greater attention to Julie, visiting her when Pavel was out. It is beyond my power to describe the tortures Pavel endured. On several occasions he had been on the verge of refusing Bakhtiarov admittance to his house, but did not feel sure this would be any good. He longed to ask the servants about the length of his visits and what went on in his own absence, but his nature was too sensitive to allow him to stoop to anything so coarse. Such questions, he felt, would humiliate both him and his wife.

The unexpected return of Lizaveta Vasilyevna did much to alleviate his sufferings. This was partly because Bakhtiarov resumed his friendship with Masurov as soon as Lizaveta Vasilyevna came back and was therefore not so often at the Beshmetevs', and partly because Lizaveta Vasilyevna was more frank with Pavel this time, confiding in him about herself and Bakhtiarov and her feelings for him. She told her brother that as soon as she had made her début in society the lion of the gubernia had begun to court her, that she had first become used to meeting him everywhere, had then taken pleasure in his talk and at last had come to think of him all the time, in a word, had fallen in love with him, and so deeply that at home or in society

he was the only person she was aware of. All other men seemed worthless in her eyes, while he possessed all the qualities she admired–looks, brains, education. But his chief attraction was his melancholy. He had suffered deeply in his youth and was now fated to carry his broken heart through a meaningless, aimless existence. In early youth he had longed to rise above the common level and might have achieved this had not other people and his own passions ruined him at the very outset. This, at least, was what Bakhtiarov had made her believe; he had asked for her sympathy, had asked her to heal his wounded heart with the balm of her youthful love. And Liza had sympathized with him. Everything he said was so convincing, so like the heroes of the novels she read! The vigilant Perepetuya Petrovna soon observed that her niece had fallen in love with Bakhtiarov and by pretending the utmost sympathy skilfully wheedled a full confession from the girl. Liza innocently admitted that Bakhtiarov had declared his love, and that she loved him, too. On hearing of her niece's peril, the old maid had thrown up her hands in terror and sounded the alarm. Scolding Liza in none too delicate terms for what she called her improper conduct, she summoned her sister and brother-in-law and solemnly informed them that their daughter was ruined–she had fallen into the clutches of that rake Bakhtiarov. Frightened out of their wits, the old parents railed at Liza in unison, assuring her that a man had a right to speak of love only to his betrothed; if he did mention it to a girl it was his bounden duty to propose to her immediately, otherwise he was a low person whose one purpose was to bring about the girl's downfall. They reminded her of a certain Masha Zhilova, who had been lured away and subsequently abandoned by a teacher of music, thus causing the death of her poor old father, and, soon after, of herself. Liza wept during the scoldings and went on weeping for the rest of the day, and when evening came wrote Bakh-

tiarov a letter telling him what had happened and begging him to propose to her on the following day so as to reassure her mother, her father, and herself. To this letter Bakhtiarov sent an impassioned reply in which he cursed the fate that made it impossible for him to do this because he was already married, but imploring Liza to go on loving him and not to curse him. Liza wept day and night for a whole week after this revelation, but refused to see Bakhtiarov. Daily calls, a dozen impassioned love-letters, even several nocturnal visits under her window left her firm. He succeeded neither in seeing nor in speaking to *Mademoiselle* Beshmeteva. In order to destroy the last vestiges of danger, Perepetuya Petrovna, in her zeal for her relatives, lost no time in finding a fiancé for her niece in the person of Mikhailo Nikolaich Masurov. Her parents gave their consent, Liza added hers, the wedding took place a week later, and at the end of a month the young couple left for Masurov's distant country estate where he said he had three mansions of solid masonry.

Lizaveta Vasilyevna neither ceased to love Bakhtiarov, nor learned to respect her husband. We have already seen how her acquaintance with Bakhtiarov was renewed and how each of them behaved. She left for the country after a meeting with her aunt during which the latter told her of the gossip circulating in town. But the main reason for her departure seems to have been that the unfortunate lady had begun to doubt her own powers of resistance. During her stay in the country she fell into a state of something like desperation. When spring came she walked through mud and puddles with nothing but slippers on her feet, in the hope of getting consumption; she rode horses reputed to be dangerous. Her health was completely undermined. Bakhtiarov wrote her several letters which she wept over but sent back unopened. At last she felt she was strong enough to prevent Bakhtiarov speaking to her of love again; but was she strong enough to give up seeing

him altogether? This was what Lizaveta Vasilyevna told Pavel.

As for Julie, she suffered no less than others all this time. Never having received anything that could be described as moral guidance, her ideal of a husband was far from the reality presented by the awkward, unpolished Pavel. His inner qualities, which might have been a source of happiness to other women, were beyond her power of comprehension or appreciation. She had made a marriage of convenience and had been sadly deceived: Pavel was neither rich nor a man of rank. Often she would spend the whole night weeping after returning from some party at which she had met another young woman in a handsome gown who had driven up in a fine carriage-and-six escorted by a husband of high degree, not yet old, and on familiar terms with all the bigwigs in the gubernia. Even harder to bear were the rumours of matches being arranged for girls of her own age who, though she was convinced they were not worth her little finger, were going to marry rich and handsome young men. Moreover, as we already know, even before her marriage she had been in love with that lucky Bakhtiarov, whose rebuffs had so wounded her. On getting married she had resolved to vex the local lion by snubbing him in her turn and making a show of affection for her husband in front of him. This resolution should have been easy to carry out, since Bakhtiarov came to see them frequently. But things turned out quite differently; in his presence she became colder than ever to her husband, found herself talking to her guest almost against her will, could not tear her eyes off his face for hours at a time. In two weeks she realized that she adored him and vowed to do all in her power to make him fall in love with her. She soon threw prudence to the winds, openly sought opportunities to be alone with him, and spoke to him of love. One day during a *tête-à-tête* Bakhtiarov took her hand with silent assurance and kissed it. Madame Beshmeteva

felt that she ought to be angry with him, but the look which the coxcomb gave her was so compelling that she could do nothing but heave a profound sigh. They were interrupted by the arrival of an important lady visitor. On taking his leave Bakhtiarov asked Julie when he could find her alone.

"The day after tomorrow," said Julie, "in the morning."

During the two intervening days she came to her senses and resolved to keep Bakhtiarov at a respectful distance, while merely ensnaring his feelings and forcing him to pay attention to no one but herself when they were in company, so as to arouse the indignation of her female acquaintances. On the appointed day she received him in the drawing-room, intentionally leaving the door into the next room open, giving a glimpse of the maid sitting there sewing. Noticing this precautionary measure, Bakhtiarov sat down opposite Julie with a grimace of displeasure. They began speaking in French. In great agitation Julie confessed that she had loved him long, but with a pure love such as no other woman had ever offered him. Bakhtiarov was utterly impassive, even morose. Nevertheless he assured Julie that he, too, had loved her for a long time, had been unable to marry her for secret reasons and had, therefore, pretended indifference to her, fearing to become the prey of feelings which could lead to nothing.

The return of Lizaveta Vasilyevna changed the course of events because it changed Bakhtiarov. He no longer called on the Beshmetevs with such frequency and once more spent whole days at the Masurovs'. Nor did he speak to Julie about love again.

Poor Julie suffered the tortures of love, jealousy, and injured pride. When almost a week passed without her seeing Bakhtiarov, she wrote him a letter in French, which I have the honour to present in translation:

"What are you doing to me? I weep, I die, I undergo the torments of hell, all because I do not see you. If you

do not love me, tell me so, kill me with a single blow, and I will only bless you for it; as it is I am dying by inches. Oh, come to me, come to me! Let me see you and tell you all I feel! If you do not, I shall die! See how I have forgotten pride and shame in writing you such a letter!

"Yours only."

By this letter Julie hoped to impress Bakhtiarov with the strength of her passion, she had no desire to reveal her suspicions, jealousy, or vanity. Pavel happened to be spending the evening with his sister. Julie sent the letter by a trusted maid, who nevertheless did not hesitate to inform her fellow-servants as she ran through the kitchen that the mistress had sent her with a note to Bakhtiarov. Once the letter was dispatched Julie really did suffer the torments of hell. She was smitten by shame and fear for what she had done. What if Bakhtiarov did not love her, was simply deceiving her? What if he showed the letter to his friends? What if the whole town, including Vladimir Andreich, got to know of it? Julie wept, praying that somehow the letter should never reach its destination. Indeed, she had just made up her mind to go and see her father and spend the evening there, when . . . Bakhtiarov arrived. Julie was all atremble. She was quite unable to return his greeting, and could only sit in her place speechless and shrinking, like a detected criminal.

"You wished to see me?" he asked, sitting down close to her.

She was unable to reply.

"You love me?" he continued, taking her hand.

Shrinking from him, Julie timidly withdrew her hand, but he took it again.

"It is you who do not love me; you are deceiving me," she said with tears in her eyes.

"Why should you say such a thing? Of course I love you," said the provincial celebrity, putting his arm around

her waist. But Julie got up quickly and went to the other end of the room.

"I don't want you to love me in that way," she said.

"In what way do you want me to love you?" asked Bakhtiarov.

"I want you to love me as a brother and a friend, to talk to me, to work with me; I want us to read books together and study music together. Mine is a pure love."

On hearing the words "pure love" Bakhtiarov made a grimace.

"*Adieu, Madame,*" he said, reaching for his hat.

Julie looked into his eyes.

"Where are you going?" she said.

"Anywhere," said the dandy. "I can no longer see you, I must not see you, I love you too much, too passionately. In your letter you expressed warmer emotions. Apparently it is *you* who are the deceiver!"

"No, no! I wrote just what I felt, you know that only too well."

"*Adieu, Madame,*" repeated Bakhtiarov.

"Wait, listen to me!" said Julie, taking his hand. "I can think of nothing but you, you are everything in the world to me—is not this love?"

"Really?" said Bakhtiarov.

But at this point they were interrupted by Pavel, who had returned from his sister's house. Bakhtiarov had just time to take a seat at a respectful distance from his hostess. They all felt too much embarrassed to start a conversation.

This time Pavel scarcely noticed that he had caught the local celebrity alone with his wife. He was thinking of poor Lizaveta Vasilyevna, who had told him that Bakhtiarov had stopped coming to see them and had sent her a letter which, almost against her will, she had accepted and read. In it Bakhtiarov had said that he must see her no more because his passion for her was growing with

every day, that he was no longer able to answer for his behaviour and was ready, despite her coldness, to throw himself at her feet in the presence of her husband and implore her to love him. After this he had not been to see them for a whole week. Lizaveta Vasilyevna told Pavel that she had got used to not seeing Bakhtiarov, it was, she said, his true nobility of character and the desire not to bring about her ruin that had made him cease to visit her. With these words the poor lady burst into tears and wept the whole evening.

XIV
THE RIVALS

At last Kurayev moved to Petersburg and Pavel received a post in a government office. This is how it came about: Vladimir Andreich, as we learned in an earlier chapter, had advised his son-in-law not to count on a professorship but to look for a post. Later he made further efforts to persuade him to do so, and at last insisted on it, saying a married man was not like a bachelor; a married man ought to spend every minute in hard work and had no right to waste years on fantastic dreams; indeed it was almost improper for a married man to sit over his books like a schoolboy.

"Pavel Vasilich," said Vladimir Andreich in his impressive voice, "we did not give our daughter to you in marriage in order that she should suffer want. And indeed, why should there be any want? Only because, if you'll forgive me for saying so, you are indolent. What are your occupations? None. I must tell you frankly that you have not the slightest chance of becoming a professor because you have undoubtedly forgotten all you knew; but a man of your gifts and education can easily become a successful official. Come, Sir, put this nonsense out of your head, and let us go tomorrow to my worthy and esteemed friend Na-

zanov; he is sure to like you and help you make a place for yourself in the world."

There was too much truth in Vladimir Andreich's words for Pavel to raise any objections. It made my hero melancholy to review his situation. He saw clearly that it was impossible for him to devote himself to his studies. For what, then, had he laboured ten whole years? What had been his reward? In society he had no standing whatever, and as for his domestic life—here he might have been happy, but Julie, cruel Julie, did not love him at all, she could not even bear to listen to him when he talked about himself or anything that interested him. In their married life there was not a trace of that happiness which springs from mutual love, from mutual efforts to please, from friendly conversations in the evening, etc., etc. Of all this there was not a trace, and now poverty, that curse of even happy marriages, had begun to make itself felt. All his money was gone, he had incurred debts to the amount of three thousand rubles, the carriage was in need of repair, one of the horses was no use at all. All these evils would have to be met, and where was the means for this? Fifty rubles was all the money he had—hardly enough to carry him through the next week. "The devil take that professorship!" decided Pavel. "I'll take a government post and go to work."

Here it must be said that, despite his lack of experience in practical matters, Pavel could not help wondering as he pondered over his present situation why Vladimir Andreich had not contributed anything to his daughter's household, why he placed all the responsibility on Pavel's shoulders, while making no acknowledgement of his son-in-law's generosity and affection for his daughter. Would it not have been more fitting for Vladimir Andreich first to teach his daughter to love and respect her husband before demanding of the husband a strict and rigid fulfilment of his duties as a married man?

However this might be, Pavel resolved to enter the government service and announced his decision to his father-in-law, who immediately took him to call on the influential Nazanov. In his turn Nazanov, out of friendship for Vladimir Andreich, made Pavel head of a department after a few weeks of trial and preparation. Pavel threw himself into the work with indefatigable energy. The papers and reports written by his hand were distinguished by their precision, brevity, and clarity of expression. Under Pavel's supervision the affairs of the department were handled more quickly and correctly than ever before; in a word, in the short space of two or three months Pavel won fame in officialdom; indeed, it began to be whispered that his superiors must surely be preparing him for the post of secretary. But who can say what battles with his will, or rather his heart, these achievements cost my hero? He was capable of working hard and had trained himself to do so, but it was almost beyond his powers to sit at his desk day after day without seeing Julie, not knowing what she was doing, tortured by the thought that Bakhtiarov was with her. To take his mind off such thoughts he began to work even more diligently, labouring all morning and even all evening until late into the night. On returning home he invariably found Julie melancholy and *distraite*. Her heart, too, ached. Bakhtiarov had kept his word and had not come to see them. For two whole weeks Julie held her feelings in check, allowing herself only to write to Bakhtiarov asking for books and music, which he invariably sent her through a servant. At last she could stand it no longer and wrote him a note asking him to come and see her, dispatching it by the same maid as before.

On the morning of that very day an incident took place which, though trivial in itself, had, as the reader will presently see, far-reaching consequences. While getting ready to go calling, Julie asked the maid helping her to dress

for a certain tulle collar. The collar was brought, but was so badly washed and ironed that it could not possibly be worn. Julie was very angry with the maid, who defended herself by saying it was not she but the housekeeper Marfa who had laundered the kerchief. Julie summoned Marfa and asked her how she dared to wash the clothes so badly. The old and respected housekeeper, offended by being made to wash all sorts of things as if she were a mere washerwoman, declared that she didn't know how to wash clothes any better and besides she was old and the mistress had no business asking her to do the work of the younger maids. Julie was naturally incensed still more by the woman's impertinence. She screamed that she would teach Marfa to wash clothes properly, and ended up by calling her a slut. Marfa, incensed in her turn, declared she was not a slut and her former mistress (might her soul rest in peace!) had never called her a slut, and why was it Julie Vladimirovna never demanded anything of her own servant, who did nothing but sleep, instead of demanding work from the master's servants, and why hadn't she brought her own maids with her whom she could order about to her heart's content?

"Get out, you wretch!" shouted Julie, spitting after the old woman as she left the room. "You beast! I'll have Pavel Vasilich punish you this very day! Get out, I say! Turn her out!"

Marfa went to the servants' quarters, weeping and muttering under her breath. All morning she grumbled and did not even come to the dinner-table, saying she had been spat at, and that evening she went to visit Lizaveta Vasilyevna's servants. Julie Vladimirovna had a quick temper, but its outbursts did not last long. When Pavel came home she even forgot to tell him of the incident, and that would have been the end of it, if Marfa had not sat so long with Lizaveta Vasilyevna's servants complaining to them of her mistress, relating what had happened in the morning and

touching on certain other matters, to wit, that although her master seemed not to notice anything, the mistress was having an affair with a tall gentleman, Bakhtiarov, and they were always writing notes to each other and she was always sending that fool of a maid to him to fetch books, she said, but in reality for quite a different reason. This very day she had sent him a note and Petrushka had peeped through a crack and seen them kissing.

"*My* lady is in love with him too," said Lizaveta Vasilyevna's maid, and that evening as she was helping her mistress to undress, she could not resist telling her the news she had heard from Marfa, embellishing it with details of her own invention. Lizaveta Vasilyevna blushed on first hearing it, then turned white as a sheet, as if all the blood had drained into her heart.

"Who told you this gossip?" she asked.

"Their housekeeper, and she's not one to tell fibs. She spent the whole evening with us and told us everything—every single thing."

"How does she know they send notes to each other?"

"How could she help knowing, Ma'am? Today the mistress sent another note with her maid."

"Today?" murmured Masurova in a scarcely audible voice.

"Today," confirmed the girl. "She sends her two or three times a day—for books, she says, but we know those books!"

"That's all nonsense; don't you dare go spreading this gossip!" said Lizaveta Vasilyevna, sending the maid away.

She could not collect her wits for some time, so stunned was she by what the girl had told her. Can it be true? she asked herself. Could Bakhtiarov have deceived her? Was he really so false, he who had always shunned all other women in her presence? Could he be in love with Julie and having an affair with her? No, it was impossible! Servants

are always ready to draw conclusions on the most trivial grounds. No doubt she was merely gracious to him in her role of hostess. But the notes? No servant would have been able to invent notes. These were the thoughts that passed through Lizaveta Vasilyevna's mind, while her heart was rent with grief. George Sand says the strength of our love lies within ourselves and has nothing to do with the qualities of the loved one, whom we endue with imaginary qualities, thus creating for ouselves the object of our love. To Lizaveta Vasilyevna, Bakhtiarov was a paragon among men. She had rejected his advances before she was married, and still rejected them because of her moral principles, but she loved him nevertheless, and respected him, too. She found something beautiful and poetical in her relations with him; she told herself that they were both victims, kindred spirits whom cruel circumstances had separated; but while they were fated to live apart, they lived with the sole thought of each other, bound by eternal and undying love. This was what she had thought till now, but what was the actual case? He had deceived her as he had deceived one woman after another. Was it possible to love one woman and at the same time have an affair with another? Could she, for instance, love another man (oh, heavens!) or even so much as think of anyone else? And yet at this very moment he was, perhaps, happy with another woman and laughing with her at Liza and Liza's love for him. In vain did reason tell the poor woman that this ought not to trouble her, that, having rejected Bakhtiarov, she had no right to expect him to be true to her, and that things were really better as they were, for now the danger of her taking a fatal step was for ever removed. Her heart was deaf to all this; she pined, she grieved, she was jealous.

Mikhailo Nikolaich came home slightly tipsy as usual late one evening and launched upon a long account of how someone had struck someone else with a chair for no ap-

parent reason. Pleading indisposition, Liza begged her husband to go to his own room. He left her, but instead of going to his room he ordered the horses and rode off again. At about twelve o'clock the next day Liza set out for her brother's house. I cannot conceal the fact that the only reason for this visit was the maid's story. No doubt I shall find him there, thought Lizaveta Vasilyevna, and if I do not, I will make a point of talking about him and see how she behaves. On reaching the Beshmetevs and seeing Bakhtiarov's carriage at the door, she stole softly through the empty hall, and even more softly through the ball-room. The door into the drawing-room was ajar and Lizaveta Vasilyevna could not resist glancing in. All her suspicions were confirmed. Bakhtiarov was seated on the sofa next to Julie, who was supporting her head on one of her hands and holding Bakhtiarov's gloved hand in the other. She looked unhappy and was clearly agitated. As for Bakhtiarov, he was gazing intently at Julie, but with what expression Masurova could not tell for her knees were giving beneath her. She seized the handle of the door with trembling hands and stood for some minutes in a state of semiconsciousness. When she recovered she retreated a step or two, coughing loudly to give warning of her presence, and only then entered the drawing-room. She found her sister-in-law sitting over some embroidery at the window and Bakhtiarov in his former place. Julie greeted Liza with some embarrassment and invited her to sit down. An awkward silence ensued.

"Where is my brother?" asked Lizaveta Vasilyevna at last.

"At the office," replied Julie. "How are you feeling now?"

"Better."

Here the conversation came to an end and there was a pause which lasted several minutes.

"How is Mikhailo Nikolaich?"

"Quite well, thanks."

There was another pause.

"What a charming frock! Where did you buy it?"

"At Krivonogov's."

"All his things are in such good taste!"

"I would hardly say that."

Again silence, this time broken by Lizaveta Vasilyevna.

"How do you spend your time?"

"Doing nothing in particular—embroidering a cushion."

"I'm bored to death. There are simply no books to be had. I hear you borrow books from Alexander Sergeyevich, *ma soeur,*" said Lizaveta Vasilyevna, indicating Bakhtiarov with her eyes.

Julie blushed crimson. As for the dandy, he first frowned, then a smile came to his lips, as if Masurova's insinuations had given him satisfaction. Another attempt at conversation was made after a long pause, but again it was a failure. Much, however, was said with the eyes: Bakhtiarov gazed silently and intently at Lizaveta Vasilyevna, who, unable to withstand his gaze, dropped her eyes; Julie pretended to be busy with her embroidery, but in reality she was noting the behaviour of Bakhtiarov, and on seeing the prolonged gaze he turned on Masurova, looked at him in mute reproach. Bakhtiarov instantly transferred his gaze to the ceiling. Lizaveta Vasilyevna, too, saw everything, and at last rose to go.

"Where are you going so soon?" asked Julie in a tone of a hostess secretly anxious to get rid of a guest.

"Home. The children are alone. Good-bye, *ma soeur, adieu, monsieur,*" said Masurova and went out.

Throughout this scene she had done her best to keep herself in hand, but on reaching home her strength failed her; her face white and drawn, she threw herself into an easy chair and sat there for a long time; then, calling Kostya, who was playing with a paper horse at the window,

she began caressing him and talking to him, but this did not help—the tears stole down her cheeks. "Heaven help me!" she murmured, and she pushed the child away and went to her own room. Mikhailo Nikolaich came home but could not get a word out of his wife, who sat lost in thought, neither seeing nor understanding what was going on around her.

When Lizaveta Vasilyevna was gone, Julie and Bakhtiarov sat for a while in silence.

"She knows everything," said Julie sighing. "See!" she continued, turning a fond glance at Bakhtiarov, "what have I done? Nothing at all, and yet evil tongues gossip about me. But I am quite calm; my conscience is clear; if Papa ever finds out I shall tell him I love you, but with a pure love. I cannot understand what makes you men so anxious to rob a woman of her peace of mind, turning her from a good, pure creature, into something loathsome whom you yourselves then hold in contempt."

Bakhtiarov did not give this elevated monologue the attention it deserved. He seemed to be busy with his own thoughts, and when Julie stopped speaking he rose and picked up his hat.

"Where are you going?" asked Julie.

"I must go. I have to offer birthday congratulations to a friend," replied the lion.

"Leaving me again!"

"I must. We'll see each other again."

"Soon?"

"Yes, soon."

"Wait—one word: has there been anything between you and Masurova?"

"Nothing whatever."

"You are lying, Monsieur; she is head over heels in love with you and is now devoured by jealousy."

"You think so?"

"As if you didn't see it! What a fox you are!"

"Adieu," said the dandy, taking Julie's hand and kissing it with a fervour intended to make up for his coldness.

Julie stood gazing after him a long, long time; then she turned pensively to her embroidery but was too distracted to work.

Meanwhile Bakhtiarov returned home, and I consider it my duty to acquaint the reader with the mental monologue he delivered as he paced the floor of his drawing-room. What a wonderful woman that Masurova is! he thought. What exquisite manners she has! How much superior to Beshmeteva she is! A worthless creature, Julie! Her every word and gesture reek of the provinces. She is very well so long as she keeps her mouth shut—young and fresh and with a handsome bust ... probably a passionate woman.... But Masurova ... there's a woman for you! I've been pursuing her these three years, and just see how she resists me! Surely it is not merely coquetry on her part! What if it's because of her moral principles, a certain inborn nobility of character! The strangest thing of all is that I am at a loss in her presence, I cannot insist, cannot push my demands. I'm like an infatuated zany—in a word, a perfect idiot. She certainly was jealous today. I should have thought of such a stratagem long ago. I'll pretend to be indifferent and carry on an affair with another woman under her very nose! Jealousy, which implies vanity, will make a woman do anything. The most amusing thing of all is to hear Madame Beshmeteva of all people discoursing in an idealistic vein!

Here the local celebrity began to search his heart more deeply, in consequence of which the following thoughts were born: the fact is, I love her as I have never yet loved a woman. Why else should I spend whole evenings recalling the time when she was still a girl? What a charming witty creature she was! What happiness I found in spending hours in their stuffy rooms doing nothing but gazing at her and admiring her! Even now I would be only too

glad to marry her, and would no doubt be as happy as it is possible for me to be. My estimation of her was true: even in her present situation just see what a tender mother and patient wife she is!

As a result of these ruminations, Bakhtiarov decided to go and see the Masurovs.

Seven o'clock seemed very far away. His eyes kept wandering to the time-piece, and at six-thirty, unable to wait any longer, he set out. He had counted on not finding Mikhailo Nikolaich at home, but he was disappointed. On seeing Bakhtiarov, Masurov was genuinely delighted.

"Ah, His Honour, the Baron!" he cried. "Liza! The Baron has come! I call you the Baron because there's something . . . ah . . . er . . . baronial about your face. Come in. My wife and I often talk about you. It's over a week since I saw you. I began to think the Baron must have found himself a Baroness." Thus prattling, Masurov guided his guest to the drawing-room. The idea of calling his friend a baron had come to him on the spur of the moment, inspired by the joy of seeing him again. Lizaveta Vasilyevna was at the samovar pouring out tea. She nodded rather distantly to their guest.

"I have the honour of presenting the Baron to you!" said Masurov. "Sit down at the table, won't you? I trust Your Excellency will not refuse to do us the honour of partaking of a cup of tea with us. Be so kind! Tea, Liza, and make it the sweetest of tea—sweet as the kiss of love! What d'you think of that? Damned if I didn't write poetry once upon a time! Remember, Liza, the acrostic I dedicated to you before we were married? All about your face being like that of a goddess. But no doubt Your Honour has written all sorts of acrostics—to Katyas and to Mashas, and to Lizas—to all the women in the alphabet. Of late I have taken a particular fancy to the name of Perepetuya, belonging to a priceless creature who happens to be my aunt; a few days ago she lent me three hundred rubles. Why aren't you

smoking? Boy, bring a pipe–see that you clean it thoroughly, with hot water. I'm so fond of you, Alexander Sergeich–you're a deuced fine fellow, if you ask me!"

Bakhtiarov made a little bow.

" 'Pon my word, you are!" continued Masurov. "And I'm a one to value a friend. Damned if I wouldn't be willing to live ten years in the country just like this–my wife, my friend, and I! What more does a man want, eh?"

Masurov chattered on without interruption, so glad was he to see Bakhtiarov. He told a story of two Ukrainian gentlemen who lived just that sort of life in the country, one of them married, the other a bachelor, and how they had kept it up for something like twenty years without a break. It was clear that Bakhtiarov was not listening to his host; all his attention was concentrated on the hostess. Lizaveta Vasilyevna was busy with Kostya, who was sitting next to her and undergoing a very trying experience. He had burnt his tongue by cramming a bun soaked in hot tea into his mouth. "Spit it out!" said his mother, but Kostya kept on chewing it with tears in his eyes. When he could stand it no longer he burst out crying and his mother took him in her arms, comforting him by saying it was all over now and there was no need to cry. When the child was pacified he began to play with his mother, laughing out loud and jumping up and down in her lap.

This was what Bakhtiarov was watching with genuine feeling.

"Julie Vladimirovna has come," announced a servant.

"Ah!" said Masurov, rushing off to meet the caller.

Lizaveta Vasilyevna darted a glance at Bakhtiarov and moved into the salon. The face of the local celebrity expressed vexation.

At this point I must turn back in my narrative. As we know, the departure of Bakhtiarov left Julie in an odd frame of mind. She was impatient to see him again, to

speak to him. She could hardly wait for the moment when Pavel went back to his office for the evening. At last it came. Julie instantly wrote Bakhtiarov an impassioned note begging him to come and see her immediately. The maid returned with the message that Bakhtiarov was not at home, that he had gone out. Julie was ready to die of disappointment. Where could he be? Where could he have gone? Surely not to the Masurovs? The same feeling of jealousy that a few hours earlier had tormented Lizaveta Vasilyevna now took possession of Julie Vladimirovna, and she made the same decision to go and call on her sister-in-law, so as to find out what was going on. But Pavel had taken the carriage. Julie's impatience was so great that she could not even wait for the return of the carriage, and set out on foot. She must have walked very fast, for on reaching the Masurovs' house she had to sit down in the entrance hall to recover her breath.

"Sister! Loveliest of sisters!" cried Masurov, kissing her hand. "How I love kissing your little hand! But why are you so pale? Another fit of hysterics?"

"No, just tired ... I came here on foot. Who is here?"

"Hardly anybody ... we're almost alone."

"Who exactly?"

"No one else but Bakhtiarov."

Julie gave a slight start, then got up and went into the salon, where she was greeted by her sister-in-law.

"Just see how promptly I return your call—I even came on foot. Pavel took the carriage, but I had a fancy for a walk."

On entering the drawing-room, Julie nodded casually to Bakhtiarov and sat down on the sofa. Mikhailo Nikolaich hastened to sit beside her.

"Remember how I rubbed snow on your face that time, Sister?" he said. "You wouldn't believe how pretty you looked!"

"And now?" asked Julie.

"Oh, much prettier now, 'pon my word! Shall I confess something to you, Sister?" went on Masurov.

"Confess what?"

"That I'm in love with you."

"Really? Why didn't you tell me before? Poor creature! I'm so sorry for you!"

"I have a feeling that you don't like me, Sister."

"Quite the contrary! But you never come to see us."

Julie Vladimirovna flirted in this manner with Masurov to tease Bakhtiarov, but to her great distress she observed that he was talking to Lizaveta Vasilyevna in undertones and hardly noticed anything. She was dying to hear what they were saying, but the voice of Mikhailo Nikolaich drowned their words.

And well might she have been curious to hear the conversation between Bakhtiarov and Lizaveta Vasilyevna, for it would have held great significance for her.

"I could not keep my word and not see you," said Bakhtiarov with deep feeling, speaking in undertones.

"I thought you came to see my husband," replied Masurova, just as softly.

"No, it is you I came to see."

"*Merci.*"

"Allow me to come to your house as before, to see you if but for an hour, a minute!"

"How comical you are, Bakhtiarov!"

"Why?"

"To say such a thing now. . . ."

Bakhtiarov frowned. Just then Julie glanced at him.

"Did you come in your carriage, Monsieur Bakhtiarov?" she asked.

"Yes," he replied.

"Then please take me home; I came on foot."

Bakhtiarov did not answer immediately, but after a pause said: "With the greatest pleasure," and left Lizaveta Vasilyevna's side.

I am bound to remark that Julie had resolved on this risky and not too respectable adventure to spite Lizaveta Vasilyevna. And Bakhtiarov gladly agreed, hoping thereby to fan the flames of Liza's jealousy.

After this everyone felt ill at ease. Lizaveta Vasilyevna looked down, Bakhtiarov took a seat at a little distance, glancing in her direction from time to time. Julie was in such a state of excitement that she scarcely heard the blandishments of Masurov, who was saying there was no one in the world he envied more than Pavel. Fifteen minutes later Julie and Bakhtiarov left. Masurov would have been only too glad to accompany them, sitting up at the back of the carriage, but this seat was occupied by the footman. Julie was almost beside herself with jealousy as she got into the carriage, otherwise, as I have already mentioned, she would never have ventured on such an incautious step.

"And after this, perhaps, you will try to tell me there is nothing between you and Masurova?" she said, seizing the hand of her adorer and holding it tightly.

"And what is there between us?"

"What indeed! Why did you come here tonight?"

"For lack of something better to do."

"Why do you deceive me? If you do not love me, tell me so frankly. Why should you torture a poor woman who worships you?"

Julie began to weep quietly.

"Stop crying, Julie! Jealousy must have driven you mad!" said Bakhtiarov. "Come, we've arrived."

Julie tried to pull herself together.

"Where are we?" she asked, seeing that it was not her house.

"Get out, *Madame,*" said Bakhtiarov, who had already alighted from the carriage.

"Are you mad?" Julie almost shricked. "Never! Not for anything in the world! I'd rather die than go with you!"

Bakhtiarov shrugged his shoulders and slammed the door of the carriage.

"To the Beshmetevs'," he said to the coachman and went into the house without so much as bowing to Julie.

XV

PAVEL FINDS OUT EVERYTHING

Lizaveta Vasilyevna fell ill. She must have been very ill, for even Mikhailo Nikolaich, who seldom noticed anything about his wife, saw that something was very wrong with her this time and, completely distraught, ran like a madman for the doctor, whom he pulled out of his bath and dragged home with him, hardly having allowed him time to dress. This doctor had a great reputation in the town. He was not an old man, but something of a pedant, that is to say, he loved to discourse, at great length and preferably in the French language, of which his knowledge was far from extensive, on diseases and the means of treating them. He felt the patient's pulse a few seconds, put his ear to her chest, then went into the drawing-room looking very grave, and on seeing that Masurov had tears in his eyes, said:

"She has pneumonia."

"Is that dangerous?" asked Masurov.

"What shall I say? Everything depends on how the disease develops. But I should like to know the real cause of her illness. Allow me to have a word with you."

"With pleasure," said Masurov.

"First of all I must explain to you that there are two sorts of inflammation of the lungs: the consumptive sort, resulting from general debility, and this is the more dangerous; then there is simple inflammation resulting from a cold, lung haemorrhage, or mental shock; this lends itself more easily to treatment. Frequent repetition of these

unfortunate inflammations may, however, cause the patient to go into a decline, that is, may bring on what amounts to consumption. Allow me to ask if your wife is anaemic?"

Mikhailo Nikolaich was unable to answer this question.

"At least can you tell me if she frequently complains of pains in the chest?"

Mikhailo Nikolaich said his wife more often complained of headache.

The doctor reflected on this.

"Does she cough, has she ever spat blood?" he asked.

Mikhailo Nikolaich could not answer these questions either. Lizaveta Vasilyevna never spoke to her husband about her illnesses.

"As a matter of fact, I may tell you that the treatment is the same in either case," said the doctor, "but I wished to go more thoroughly into the matter because if a patient suffering from inflammation of the lungs happens to be anaemic, it is my rule to adopt a radical form of treatment once the inflammation has subsided, namely, to cure the anaemia itself, strike at the very roots of the disease."

Having thus dazzled Masurov with his erudition, the doctor gave orders to bleed the patient and apply a blister to her left side, after which he wrote out a prescription.

Masurov did not sleep all night and in the morning sent for Pavel, who instantly came to see his sister. Mikhailo Nikolaich stayed at home three days, though anyone could see what an effort this cost him. He kept going to his wife's bedside.

"You're feeling better, aren't you, Liza? Why, you look quite well now! Don't you think you had better sit up, even walk about a little instead of lying down all the time? Do get up, darling, it's much worse to lie down, 'pon my word it is! Go into the drawing-room and sit with your brother while I run out for a minute—there is a visit it is imperative that I should make."

Lizaveta Vasilyevna smiled.

"Go, then!"

"No, darling–I gave my word I wouldn't leave the house until you were out of bed. Pavel Vasilich, let's have a game of boston–I'll teach you to play in two tries. Or no, let's play stoss, it's easier!"

Pavel refused to play either game, saying he couldn't bear cards. Out of sheer boredom Mikhailo Nikolaich sat on the floor and began romping with Kostya, but the doctor forbade this, saying the noise was bad for the patient. Masurov went into the drawing-room and lay down on the sofa in desperation. Pavel, who usually had very little to say to his brother-in-law, felt so sorry for him that he joined him.

"How did Liza fall ill?" asked Pavel.

"Must have caught cold," said Masurov. "Don't remember how. Your Julie Vladimirovna and Bakhtiarov were here yesterday... they spent the evening. Liza saw them to the door. Julie came on foot, it seems... he took her home in his carriage."

"Who did?" asked Pavel reddening.

"Bakhtiarov. Liza went out on to the porch to see them off and stayed out for almost an hour, I'm afraid. I called to her several times, told her she'd catch cold if she didn't come in, but she said it was stuffy indoors. She looked very pale when she came in; went to bed and hasn't got up since."

"What time was it when Julie left?" asked Pavel.

"Early. Just after we'd had tea. But you know how damp these spring nights are. I remember once when I was in the regiment... a night in spring... an affair of the heart, you know... oh, what a fever I caught! Quite astounding! That's love for you, damn it all! But it's the women who are astounding–they're more daring than we are. They'll go through fire and water to get what they want."

This time Pavel did not remain long with his sister, but soon went home.

A week passed. Lizaveta Vasilyevna was feeling better. The doctor declared that the inflammation had subsided. On learning that there had been streaks of blood in her saliva for the last six months, he decided, once the inflammation had been (as he put it) checked, to give her radical treatment for anaemia. Meanwhile Pavel was growing thinner and more absent-minded from day to day. He did hardly any work at the office, just sat with his head bowed in his hands. He was tormented by jealousy—frantic, racking jealousy. He could not rid his mind of what Masurov had told him: that Julie had returned in the carriage with Bakhtiarov. After a few days of inward struggle, he decided to ask his wife about it.

"Did you return from my sister's with Bakhtiarov a few days ago?"

"Yes, he brought me home in his carriage," she replied tranquilly.

Either she is innocent or she is a fiend! I would die of shame if anyone were to ask me such a question, thought Pavel. He did not question her again, but his suspicions were increased by certain inquiries which Lizaveta Vasilyevna made—as when she asked him who came most often to see him and Julie, and wouldn't it be better for Pavel to change his post and go to live in Petersburg, since in this town people did nothing but scheme and gossip. He was likewise disturbed when she observed that Julie was very young and a little flighty and needed to have an eye kept on her. The gentle Lizaveta Vasilyevna was incapable of telling her brother all she knew. On the other hand, she pitied him and longed to warn him. But what good would it do? she asked herself. Perhaps the danger will pass without his ever knowing about it. As to what she thought about her own affairs, her illness is the best commentary on that.

At last Pavel could no longer endure the torments of suspense. "I will say I am going to spend the evening with

Liza and come back quietly," he thought. "No doubt I will find him with her and then . . . then I will have to do something decisive. Oh, Lord, oh, Lord! If only my suspicions turn out to be unfounded!" This was the measure Pavel decided to take as he was coming home for dinner one day. On reaching his home he was ashamed to look Julie in the face. It seemed to him that she already knew his intention and was insulted. That day Julie really was upset about something.

"Are you coming home early this evening?" she asked Pavel.

"At the usual time," he replied.

He hardly had the strength to utter the words.

The reader will no doubt have no difficulty in guessing that Pavel did nothing but sit and brood when he got to his office.

"Why did you come back to the office when you have such a headache?" a young clerk asked him. "If you went home we could go too. After all, there's not much work to be done."

"I will leave earlier tonight; I have a dreadful headache," said Pavel.

"I should like to go too, Pavel Vasilich; it's my uncle's birthday."

"He's always toadying and begging favours," snapped another clerk with flaxen hair and a heavily pock-marked face.

Pavel left in half an hour. He walked home quickly with no clear intention in his mind and no distinct emotions, and on reaching the house he stopped. Would it not be better for him to go back and remain in blissful ignorance? But something seemed to urge him forward. I'll go through with it! he told himself, and went into the hall convinced he would find Julie in Bakhtiarov's arms. He passed through the ball-room—it was in darkness. He entered the drawing-room—it, too, was in darkness. The house

was deserted. The only light to be seen came from the maids' room.

"Isn't there anyone at home?" he asked.

"No, Sir," said Marfa, getting up.

Pavel longed to ask her where her mistress was, but could not bring himself to do so.

"Bring a candle to the drawing-room," he said in a strange voice as he left the maids' room.

The candle was brought.

Where could she be? he thought. Why can't I ask where she has gone? No doubt there are people who would not think twice about it.

"Marfa!" he called in an unusually loud voice.

Marfa came in.

"Is there any wine in the house?"

"Yes, Pavel Vasilich. Would you like some Madeira?"

"That will do as well as any other."

Marfa brought in a full bottle and a wine-glass, but Pavel demanded a tumbler and drank three tumblers without stopping. The wine really did lend my hero energy. He sat on for a few minutes, then got up and walked uncertainly to the maids' room, where he asked Marfa to come into the drawing-room. Marfa followed him with a frightened look on her face.

"Where's your mistress?" asked Pavel without raising his eyes.

"I don't know, Sir."

"That's a lie! You do know. Where's your mistress?"

"Pavel Vasilich, Sir! We're only servants, Sir!"

"Where's your mistress?" repeated Pavel.

"Pavel Vasilich, I was maid to your dear mother; I can't be false to you. She's gone out, Pavel Vasilich."

"Where?"

"I'm in your power, you can do what you like with me, but I can't keep anything from you, for I served your dear mother and now I serve you."

"I asked you where she had gone."

"She's gone where she ought not to have, Pavel Vasilich. We were very sorry, Pavel Vasilich, Sir; we dared not tell you about it, but we were very sorry."

"Tell me everything!"

"If you order me to speak I dare not disobey you, Sir. My mistress is at Bakhtiarov's—I saw our carriage at his door with my own eyes. I says to the coachman: 'You fiend!' I says, 'How dare you take the mistress to such a place?' 'It's none of your business, old cow!' says he and even swore at me, the blackguard! 'Oh, no,' says I to myself, 'I'll not allow them to bring disgrace on my master, the miscreants, I'll tell him everything the moment he comes home!' "

A few minutes later Pavel was in front of Bakhtiarov's house. There stood his carriage at the local celebrity's door. The coachman who had offended Marfa was lolling on the back seat humming softly: "Lovely lady, lovely lady!"

"Whom did you bring?" said Pavel, going quickly over to him and poking him in the ribs.

The coachman leaped to his feet, sprang to attention, and turned pale.

"Whom did you bring?" repeated Pavel.

"The . . . the horses . . ." replied the coachman.

"Where's your mistress?" said Pavel.

"I don't know, Pavel Vasilich," replied the coachman.

"Where's your mistress?" shouted Pavel, seizing the coachman by the collar and shaking him with a strength he had not known he possessed.

"I d-d-don't know, Pavel Vasilich, I was told to wait here."

Pavel let go of the man's collar and stood glaring at him a few moments as if debating whether to kill him or not; then, apparently arriving at a decision, he turned and walked briskly home. On the way he splashed straight through puddles, ran into a baker's stall, overturning it

and knocking over an old beggar-woman, and when at last he reached his house he had lost his hat. The coachman was left with the most disturbing thoughts.

"A pretty kettle of fish!" he said to himself as he scratched the back of his head. "He'll give me a flogging yet! And all for five rubles! Hm.... You never know how things are going to turn out!"

As soon as he got home Pavel wrote his wife the following letter:

> "I know where you are. Naturally, you are much happier with your lover than you ever were with your husband. Your fate is decided: I shall not stand in your way, you are free to do whatever you like, you may remain with him today, tomorrow, and for the rest of your life. In an hour I will send you your clothes. I have no desire to reproach or pursue you; I may have been to blame myself for venturing to seek your hand, but I am at a loss to understand why you gave it to me against your will."

When the letter was written Pavel remained sitting where he was for a few minutes, then got up and went quickly into his mother's room, which had become his study, and glanced at the box containing his razor.... But at that very moment there was a sound of something falling. Pavel shuddered and turned round. His eyes fell on an icon of the Virgin Mary before which his old mother had so often knelt in prayer. He threw himself on his knees in front of it. The expression of his face softened, and redeeming tears streamed down his cheeks. For a long time he knelt there lost in prayer, and when peace had come to him he went into the drawing-room, called Julie's maid, and told her to put up his wife's clothes.

That the reader may not be too horrified by Julie's scandalous conduct, I must turn back and relate the following circumstances:

We have seen how Bakhtiarov last parted with her. For a week after that he did not call on the Beshmetevs but went every day to inquire after the health of Lizaveta Vasilyevna, which evidently caused him much concern. In vain did Julie send to him for books and write him despairing notes: Bakhtiarov sent the books but did not appear himself and gave orders to say he was ill and could not leave the house. "I will go to him; since he is ill, no sacrifice is too great for me to make. Let him see how I love him! Perhaps he is dying; no considerations must deter me." Having made this decision, Julie once more began to suffer the torments of hell. She sent for the coachman without fully realizing what she was doing, gave him five rubles for drink, and ordered him to harness the horses at six o'clock in the evening and drive her to Bakhtiarov's. On the way she said to herself: "I'll take one look at him, tell him I have sacrificed everything just to see him, and instantly return home."

While Julie was deciding upon and carrying out her escapade, Bakhtiarov was going through hours of tedium. For some reason–boredom, perhaps–he had got up that morning in a bad temper that lasted all the morning. To shake it off he decided to give himself the luxury of an unusually good luncheon. Accordingly he called the cook, who announced he was preparing a delicious steak, which his master ordered to be served as soon as ready, together with two bottles of wine. By two o'clock these delicacies had been disposed of. After expending what little energy remained to him on dinner, Bakhtiarov succumbed to the listlessness engendered by bad weather and fell asleep, waking up at six o'clock in the worst of tempers and with a fierce thirst, which he decided to quench with champagne and soda water. Just then the footman announced that a lady had come to see him. Bakhtiarov scarcely had time to pull his loose coat around him when Julie came into the

room. Her entrance was melodramatic–the sort of entrance a tragedienne makes in the last act.

"I know you were not expecting me," she said, taking the dandy's hand. "I have only come to have one look at you," she went on, sitting down on the sofa and fixing a look full of desperate tenderness on his face.

I cannot say what Bakhtiarov's thoughts were at that moment; for some time he stood looking at his caller with a strange expression on his face.

"Can you possibly doubt my love for you now?"

"Julie! I'm very glad to see you," said Bakhtiarov at last. "But wait, I'll give orders not to let anybody else in."

He disappeared for a few minutes, and on coming back sat down beside her.

"It was kind of you to come and cheer my solitude," he said. "Take off your hat and give me your hands–such pretty little hands."

"I've only come for a minute; I only wanted to see you and say farewell."

"Nonsense! Why hurry? Nobody can possibly know you are here."

"I know what a foolish thing I've done and will never forgive myself for it."

"You're talking nonsense, Julie. Don't think about it! Boy! Bring us champagne and soda water. You must drink with me–I'm in the mood for drinking today."

"But you're ill, my friend. It may do you harm."

"Wine never does me any harm. You and I will drink together."

"I cannot."

"Nonsense. If I ask you to do it as a sacrifice for my sake?"

"Well . . . just as a sacrifice, and then we must go straight to my house."

"It shall be as you say."

The wine was brought.

At the same time Pavel's letter to Julie was brought. On reading it she turned pale and handed it to Bakhtiarov. He in his turn showed signs of discomfiture.

"Who could have told him?" he asked after a few moments' consideration.

"I don't know," said Julie.

Bakhtiarov went into the salon. The coachman, who was standing in the hall, told him everything.

Bakhtiarov went back to the distraught Julie.

"He came himself right up to the door," he said.

"What am I to do?" she said.

"You must go home."

"I'm afraid, Alexander," said Julie. "Come with me; we'll tell him I went for a drive and only dropped in to see you for a moment."

"Splendid! Do you want us to fight a duel in your presence?"

"I'm afraid, Alexander!"

"What are you afraid of?"

"I don't know. I've never been afraid before. What if he kills me?"

"What an absurd idea! At the worst you'll have a quarrel, you'll shout him down and tell him you just went out for a drive."

"I'll tell him I lent you the carriage and I was somewhere else."

"Very good."

Julie got up, put on her hat, and paused. It was obvious that she could not bear to go.

"Ah, Alexander! What have you brought me to! What will happen to me now?"

"You have been very reckless, Julie."

"I like that! So it is I who am to blame! You're a terrible man—you are incapable of understanding me. How can I help being reckless when you are everything in the

world to me, my only joy in life? I hate my husband, I cannot bear the sound of his voice! What am I to do? Teach me how to stop loving you!"

"You may go on loving me, but not so openly."

"No, Alexander, I am incapable of concealment. I will tell him tonight that I love you and let him do whatever he likes—let him beat me, turn me out of his house! I cannot live without you! My friend, my beloved! Take me away from him, save me from that wretch! Take me away from here— I'll do anything for you, I'll be your slave!"

"A mere delusion; you're still very young, Julie."

"No, my dear, it is no delusion, it is true love. Come now, if my husband turns me out, won't it be your duty to give me shelter? Have you not robbed me of my good name?"

"It is time for you to go, Julie."

"If he turns me out or makes a scene I'll come back to you this very night. I cannot go on living with him."

Bakhtiarov said not a word. After a few more minutes of indecision, Julie left.

"Deuce take it!" said the local celebrity, when left to himself. "That woman is mad enough to force herself on me! She's like the romantic heroine of some ridiculous novel. I must find a way of shaking her off. I have a feeling she really will come back tonight. Shall I go and pay some calls? What's the good? She'd only come back tomorrow. I must cut myself free once and for all! I'll write her a note for Jacques to give to her when she comes. I'll tell the servants to lock the doors and not let her in; if I don't she'll sit and wait for me, for all I know."

Having come to this decision, Bakhtiarov instantly wrote Julie a note:

"I cannot receive you in my house for fear of inviting further trouble. Now that your husband has found out, we must sever our relations. By taking you away from him I would be the cause of your ruin, and that would

be foolish and dishonourable on my part. Be reasonable and make it up with your husband. If he considers himself insulted, I, as a gentleman, am ready to give him satisfaction."

Bakhtiarov sent for his man, dressed, gave him the note, and told him to give it to Julie if she came back. He also told him to say that he had gone away for several days, and ordered the rooms to be locked.

The astute Jacques guessed at the state of affairs. He instantly locked the doors and sat down on the railing of the porch with a cigar between his teeth.

"Julie Vladimirovna, Ma'am," said the coachman to Julie as he drove her home. "Be so good, Your Ladyship, as to put in a word for me and take the blame on yourself; no harm can come to you—just say you made me do it. Please do, Your Ladyship! I'll pray for you the rest of my life if you do."

But Julie was deaf and blind to all around her. On reaching home, however, she took herself in hand and marched boldly into the drawing-room where Pavel was sitting.

"What is the meaning of your letter?" she said, taking off her hat and sitting down on the sofa.

Pavel, who had not expected to see his wife, got up in consternation when she entered and was dumbfounded by her words.

"I went out for a drive and looked in to see Bakhtiarov—what of it? Ladies often call on him."

"Julie! To be so young and yet so . . .", began Pavel.

"So what?"

"So shameless!"

"It's you who are shameless—imagining things, and listening to the tales the servants tell you!"

"I repeat what I wrote in my letter: I cannot go on living with you."

Julie looked at her husband.

"So you're turning me out?"

"Not turning you out, but giving you complete freedom; you may go wherever you choose this very minute."

"You have no right to do such a thing! I'm your wife and you're obliged to support me."

"I will support you, I will give you an allowance, but I cannot live with you."

"Merciful heavens! How you frightened me! I shall be only too glad, but mind you really do give me an allowance."

"I knew you would be glad and that is why I ask you to leave immediately."

"What?"

"I ask you to leave my house."

"Where am I to go?"

"Wherever you like."

"Are you mad? Or drunk?"

"I am neither drunk nor mad, but I repeat that you must leave me this very minute—money and your clothes have been got ready for you."

"Upon my word! And I thought he was only pretending! What a beast you are!"

"You may call me all the names you like; anything is to be expected from a woman like you."

"And what sort of a woman am I?"

"A loose, shameless woman."

"Here are my thanks!" screamed Julie and spat at her husband.

Pavel turned white and began to tremble all over.

"Listen, you foolish woman, I am long-suffering but my patience may come to an end."

His eyes were flashing, his lips were flecked with foam. Julie retreated and threw herself into an armchair.

"He's killing me! Help! Help! He's killing me!"

Several servants came running up but Pavel was in the

salon by this time, where he stood huddled in the doorway, clutching at his hair like a madman.

"I can't live with him, he'll murder me this very night! Where are my clothes? Go and fetch them! I'm going away! It wasn't enough to force me to marry him, now I'm to be murdered! I'll write to my father tomorrow. What if I do love Bakhtiarov? I could hardly be expected to love you, could I? A decent man would try to hide it. Order the carriage, I am leaving immediately and I'll write to my father tomorrow, and then sue you for the money you're obliged to give me."

"You will receive the proper allowance from me without going to law," replied Pavel from the salon.

Julie put on her hat, picked up her bags, and drove away accompanied by her maid. But in half an hour she was back. This time she could hardly walk, even with the support of her maid. As soon as she got to the drawing-room she stopped, pulled her arm free, and fell unconscious on the floor. Hearing the noise, Pavel came into the drawing-room and saw her lying as if dead. The maid ran for spirits and for someone to help her lift her mistress. This time Beshmetev returned to his own room utterly unmoved by his wife's fainting fit.

Julie soon came to, but was quite hysterical. She sobbed out loud, but though the sound reached the ears of her hard-hearted husband he showed not the faintest inclination to go to her and seek a reconciliation and actually sent the maid to ask her when she meant to leave his house. The maid had not the heart to convey this to her mistress, but Pavel sent her a note asking her bluntly to leave the house. Julie answered him by word of mouth that he was a fool, that she would stay just to spite him, and he could go himself if he wanted to get rid of her so badly.

So ended this fatal day in the lives of my hero and his wife.

XVI
BAKHTIAROV

So far I have had the pleasure of presenting the local celebrity in society or engaged in interesting conversations with ladies; I have also recorded the way in which these same ladies expressed their opinions of him. It follows that the sources on which I have drawn in acquainting the reader with this personage have been highly unreliable, and, therefore, I consider it my duty at this point to give an account, however brief, of his past life, from which there had emerged a personality so dangerous to local husbands.

Bakhtiarov's father was a country gentleman owning two thousand serfs. Until the age of fifty he had remained single, during which time he succeeded in accumulating a serious case of gout and some three hundred thousand rubles. He kept his estate in good order and unmortgaged, found diversion in the conventional forms—hunting with hounds and keeping two or three domestic buffoons; three times a year he invited his numerous relatives to his house and held holiday. But in his old age, to the horror of his relatives, who were counting on the inheritance, he married a young Frenchwoman, a governess in a neighbouring estate. The first and only offspring of this marriage was our friend Bakhtiarov. Despite the insinuations of the embittered relatives, the child had obviously inherited the powerful frame and tall stature of his father as well as the black eyes and exquisite complexion of his mother. Before he had reached the age of seven his aged father died. His mother instantly moved to Petersburg to give her son a fitting education. At the age of ten Alexander, beautiful as an angel, could execute the most intricate dance-steps, speak three languages, ride a horse to perfection, and handle the foils skilfully. His mother wished to take him to Paris to complete his education. On hearing of this, the

boy's relatives were in despair, foreseeing that in three years he would be reduced to penury by his mother's squandering her fortune on some former lover. Their fears were quickly justified, for on arriving in Paris the widow entrusted her son to a relative (a professor in a Paris school) so that she might be free to enjoy the delights of Paris. In a single month twenty thousand rubles had been spent in dressmakers' shops, and by the end of the year another nought might have been added to this sum if fate had not come to the aid of the fatherless boy. On one of her outings the Frenchwoman caught cold during a party of pleasure and subsequently died of typhoid fever. Alexander became the ward of the professor, who was by birth and nature a true German. He had his own ideas of education, which we find fairly correct: he believed that up to the age of ten a boy ought to live with his mother and receive a purely "physical" education, that is to say, should sleep twenty hours a day, eat enormous quantities of potatoes, and play ball or nine-pins half an hour a day for the development of his muscles. At the age of eleven he should be taken in hand by his father or tutor and made to learn by heart weighty tomes containing the grammar and vocabularies of ancient languages, besides a few dozen textbooks of various sorts. After that, on reaching the age of eighteen and showing the first manifestations of the tender passion, he should be sent to a German university to receive specialized knowledge and enjoy life to the full.

It was to such a system of education the honourable professor hoped to subject his young ward, but alas! he found this practically impossible because the child, though already fourteen years old, did not know a single ancient language, proved to be utterly incapable of committing long lessons to memory, and when he was only fifteen years old, exactly three years before the age specified in the German's scheme, showed unmistakable manifesta-

tions of the tender passion, for despite all that the German could do, he spent every evening in the wings of the theatre, or strolling up and down the boulevards, picked up an acquaintance with all the *grisettes* in the neighbourhood, and to crown all was discovered one fine evening in a somewhat ambiguous pose with a young housekeeper the honourable professor had hired for his own consolation. Convinced in this wise that his ward was of age, the professor decided to pack him off to a German university. For his part, the youth was delighted with the decision, for he had had his fill of his guardian, his meals and household, the seductive housekeeper notwithstanding. And so two months later he found himself in Germany.

The professor had provided Bakhtiarov with at least a dozen letters of introduction to eminent scholars. But the youth did not make use of a single one of them and might not have entered the university at all had not the swashbuckling *Burschenschaft* of that period appealed so strongly to his imagination. He instantly changed his fashionable Parisian frock-coat for a Spanish tunic, bought himself a deerskin jacket and a set of rapiers, began drinking enormous quantities of beer, smoking strong *"Knaster,"* and flirting with *Fräuleins.* Two years passed in this way. Bakhtiarov acquired a smattering of philosophy, grasped the spirit of Roman history, and memorized several monologues from *Faust.* But at last he grew weary of mist-ridden Germany, of the *Burschenschaft,* the strong tobacco and the *Fräuleins.* He resolved to go to Russia and enter a cavalry regiment. In a year's time he was a handsome, adroit, and more or less disciplined officer.

His easy circumstances, elegant manners and worldly polish enabled him to live on friendly terms with his aristocratic fellow-officers. But this was not enough for the vain cornet, who desired to be received into the select circles in which his comrades moved, so as to get a nearer view of the charming ladies with whom they were in

love and whom they discussed so endlessly. He gained the *entrée* into these circles without, however, creating much impression on them. But Bakhtiarov was not one to give up at the first failure. He vowed he would force these people to take notice of him, and determined, therefore, to startle Petersburg by making a show of wealth. He bought handsome carriages, exchanged them for still handsomer ones in a month's time, occupied luxurious apartments, and gave his high-born friends sumptuous banquets at which champagne and old Hungarian wines flowed freely.

Rumours of his lavish living penetrated the boudoirs, notice began to be taken of him, his witticisms began to evoke laughter. Thus three years went by. But the ambitious cornet's indulgence in the delights of society life, so flattering to his vanity, so diverting, subtle enough to satisfy the demands of his mind and heart, threatened to bring his paternal inheritance to the usual end—the auctioning of property to pay debts. Bakhtiarov was too wise to let things go too far. On discovering one fine morning that he could not possibly go on living at such a pace he decided to change his way of life, and, almost convincing his friends that he was melancholy and weary of the world, vanished from society and decided to repair his fallen fortunes by a marriage of convenience.

His star had not yet set. He was able to find himself a bride who suited his plan, the widow of a rich merchant. In early youth her parents had sent her to a private school to complete her education, after which these same parents gave her in marriage to a merchant with a long beard who soon died of an apoplectic stroke, leaving his wife three factories, and capital amounting to a million rubles. She remained single for five years, cherishing a secret desire to marry a healthy, good-looking young officer. Bakhtiarov possessed these qualities in abundance, and so it was not surprising that he should have achieved

his end very quickly and received, on the completion of the marriage ceremony, not only the title of husband, but fifty thousand rubles for his private expenses as well. Profitable as the marriage was, the young cornet, who had once moved in the highest circles, could not but suffer in his vanity. And so, much to his young wife's disappointment, he handed in his resignation from the regiment the day after his marriage, with the intention of moving to Moscow at once. Despite her pleadings to the contrary he doffed the uniform which became him so, and within a few months they were in Moscow. The first year passed tolerably well for both of them. Bakhtiarov visited clubs, dined at hotels, and spent the rest of his time betting and going to races. His wife dressed in the latest fashion and attended all sorts of social functions.

At last Bakhtiarov grew weary of it all. By devious means he extracted a fair sum from his wife, after which he left her and went to live in the provinces. For this purpose he bought an estate in the gubernia where we first made his acquaintance and attempted to make practical application of his knowledge of agriculture. But his efforts were a failure. All his conscientious rotation of crops, his sowing of clover, his rolling of oats, came to nothing—not only did his corn and hay and oats fail to increase, but in two years' time he was forced to buy additional corn for fodder in February. Cursing the severe climate and bad soil, Bakhtiarov moved to the capital of the gubernia where, from the moment he first made his appearance in society, he was the sole and constant subject of conversation among the ladies. This was the natural outcome of his various qualities. The reader already knows how handsome he was; he knew French, German, and English to perfection; and his conversation was very witty and amusing when he was in the mood, at least all the ladies thought so. He knew Paris as a peasant knows the village in which he is born, he had tramped over half Ger-

many, and for two years had moved in the highest circles of Petersburg. But as an unprejudiced narrator I am bound to asseverate that he had little respect for women. The only exception was Lizaveta Vasilyevna, but whether this was because he could not win her no matter how he tried, or because he really appreciated her fine qualities, or because her manners, her carriage, even her face, reminded him of those charming women he had met in high society, even he could not decide.

XVII

IN THE COUNTRY

On the day following the scene I have described between Pavel and Julie, both of them were ill. Seeing that his wife had no intention of leaving him, Pavel decided to leave her, nobly resolving to give her half of everything he possessed. Early the next morning he asked for leave of absence, meaning to depart on the following day, and told Marfa to inform his wife of his decision. Pavel and Julie did not see each other. Julie was thoroughly frightened. To be separated from her husband! What would people say? How would Vladimir Andreich receive the news?

And why should Pavel treat her like this? Had she done anything so very outrageous? She would have to take measures at once; Pavel had firmly decided to go to the country. She certainly was not going to ask his forgiveness! And who was there, now that Papa was away, to bring the fool to his senses? At this point in her meditations she was interrupted by the arrival of our old friend Feoktista Savvishna who, by means known to herself alone, had already found out what had happened down to the least detail and had come to call on her friends in their grief.

"I have just heard from your maid that you were indisposed," she said after exchanging greetings with Julie. "I've been meaning to call for a long time but simply couldn't find a free moment. The Marovs are having a wedding soon and you know that, after your Papa's, that house comes first with me, and I don't care who hears me say it. But what's the matter with you, dear? It's this damp weather–you've caught cold, I suppose."

"I'm very unhappy, Feoktista Savvishna," said Julie, closing her eyes.

"What's that, Julie Vladimirovna? What do I hear?"

"My husband is going to leave me."

"Pavel Vasilich? What's come over him?"

"He's jealous; won't let me out of the house. Yesterday I went for a drive and he has taken it into his head that I went to see––"

"Who is it he thinks you went to see?"

"That beast of a Bakhtiarov."

"Think of that now!" said Feoktista Savvishna, shaking her head. "He's so jealous! But don't take it too hard, Julie Vladimirovna, all men are like that. They can do what they please, but *we* must toe the mark."

"But he's leaving me," interrupted Julie. "He's going to the country. Please speak to him–tell him he must have gone out of his mind, that respectable people don't do such things, that it's low and base; let him hate me as much as he likes but go on living with me, at least for the sake of appearances–I won't stop him doing anything he likes."

"Oh, Julie Vladimirovna, how could anyone hate you? Only in a fit of temper, nothing else! Indeed I will speak to him, but I will try to find out a thing or two on the quiet and give you an answer this very day. You ought to have sent for me long ago–aren't you ashamed? A thing like this happening and not sending for me! You know how devoted I am to your family–only the other

day I got a letter from Vladimir Andreich—he wants me to sell his old carriage for him. Well, good-bye till we meet again."

On leaving the Beshmetevs', Feoktista Savvishna wondered how best she could set about accomplishing the task she had taken upon herself. She regretted that Perepetuya Petrovna was not in town: the old maid was so angry with her nephew that she had spent the summer in the country and even intended staying there all winter so as not to have to witness the family scandal. She, of course, would have been more than ready to take part and help Feoktista Savvishna dissuade Pavel. The matchmaker set out for Lizaveta Vasilyevna's, for she felt it would be both improper and useless for her to speak to Pavel.

Liza's maid had told her what had happened at the Beshmetevs' just before Feoktista Savvishna arrived. Lizaveta Vasilyevna was greatly disturbed and wished to send for her brother.

"Dear me, whatever's going on at your brother's house, Ma'am?" said Feoktista Savvishna without further ado. "I've just come from there, Julie Vladimirovna is in tears, Pavel Vasilich is in distress—I didn't even see him. They say he means to go to the country and leave his wife here. But judge for yourself—that's divorce, no more nor less! Who ever heard of such a thing! All husbands and wives have their ups-and-downs, as you yourself know only too well. And it's all come from a trifle. Yesterday she went for a drive with that feather-brained Bakhtiarov."

Lizaveta Vasilyevna was greatly displeased that the affair was already known to Feoktista Savvishna, but it couldn't be helped.

"I have had no reliable report," she said. "I don't suppose it's anything serious."

"Oh, yes, it is!" said Feoktista Savvishna. "I've just come from them. Julie Vladimirovna begged me with tears in her eyes to tell you everything. 'You know how I love

and respect my sister-in-law,' she says. 'I'd go and speak to her myself if I wasn't in such a state,' she says. 'Ask her to talk her brother out of doing such a thing. If he wants to go to the country so badly we can go together.' "

"If my brother intends to go to the country, of course he will take his wife with him," replied Lizaveta Vasilyevna.

"Ah, but that's just it—he intends to go alone. That's what Julie Vladimirovna is so upset about. Send for him, my dear, and have a good talk with him. I'd do it myself, but it wouldn't be the thing, I'm an outsider. I'll sit here behind the screen and you talk to him."

"When does he think of going?"

"Tonight or tomorrow morning."

Lizaveta Vasilyevna was very anxious to see her brother, but not in the presence of Feoktista Savvishna. However, knowing it was utterly impossible to get rid of her once she had begun meddling in an affair, she asked her to join the children in the nursery before sending for her brother. An hour passed, a second, a third, and still Pavel did not come. Too impatient to wait any longer, the energetic Feoktista Savvishna set out on business of her own, promising to call again in the evening.

It was nearly three o'clock when Pavel came.

For a few minutes brother and sister said nothing.

"Have you quarrelled with your wife, Brother?" asked Lizaveta Vasilyevna at last.

Pavel did not answer.

"Don't take it so to heart, dear! Things don't always go smoothly in married life. Sometimes my husband and I have as many as three quarrels a day. Is it true that you intend to go to the country alone?"

"Yes. I am going tonight."

"Alone?"

"Yes."

"Don't do it, Brother! It will be a sin on your soul. You're a man and ought to be indulgent."

"I can be indulgent towards weakness but not towards vice."

"Why does my husband forgive me?"

"As if there could be any comparison!"

"There is. I, too, have loved another man."

"Don't say such a thing, Liza. You're an angel!"

"Very well, I won't, but give me your word to take her to the country with you. You can think what you like of her, but you have no right to ruin her good name; you married her against her will, don't forget."

These last words seemed to shake Pavel's resolution.

"It's very hard for me to live with her, Liza. Now that I have discovered what she really is I can never love her again."

"Don't say that, Brother! Time will prove. You loved her once, now you don't, and later you will again. Just as she used not to love you but will come to love you. Believe me, dear, marriage-bonds are tied in heaven and we have no right to sever them at will."

"Let's have some wine, Liza," Pavel said suddenly. "I'm so dejected."

Lizaveta Vasilyevna glanced at her brother in surprise but ordered the wine. Beshmetev swallowed a glassful.

"For a whole year I have made one sacrifice after another for that woman," he said. "And for a whole year she saw and understood nothing. Even now I doubt if she repents of what she has done—and you would have me make another sacrifice for her!"

"Not for her sake, Brother, but for mine. It was I who advised you to marry her and I feel responsible."

"It was wrong of me to marry her as I did, without really knowing her," said Pavel. "But now I do know her. This is what she is like, Liza: she is ignorant and shrewish, she doesn't love me, can hardly bear the sight of me, and, much as I hate to admit it, she is lustful. And do you still say I ought to live with her?"

"I do. And what is more it is your duty to make her better. God has given her into your hands. Once more I beg you to forgive her and stay with her."

"I will, Liza! But I can't go on living with her here—the very walls shame me."

"Then do not. Leave for the country tonight."

"But I can't speak to her."

"No need for that. I'll write her a letter or ask somebody to speak to her. When do you think of leaving?"

"Tomorrow."

With this the brother and sister parted.

Scarcely half an hour passed after Pavel's departure when Feoktista Savvishna came back to see Lizaveta Vasilyevna and to her surprise learned that nothing of great import had taken place between Pavel and his wife, just a little tiff, and they were leaving together for the country on the following day. The matchmaker, however, was too experienced to be deceived. She instantly guessed that things had taken the turn she had hoped for, but that the truth was being hidden from her. She took leave of Lizaveta Vasilyevna in high dudgeon and went to call on Julie Vladimirovna.

"Well, Ma'am, everything's arranged; kindly prepare to leave for the country," she announced as soon as she got there. "If you only knew what a fight I had for you, Julie Vladimirovna! I went straight from here to Lizaveta Vasilyevna's. At first nothing came of my efforts—they simply wouldn't listen to me. 'Very well,' says I, 'but don't forget Vladimir Andreich is still among the living; he'll come from Petersburg and how are you to make amends to him for ruining his daughter?' says I. That frightened them, you may be sure. 'Very well,' says he, 'only we must go to the country.' "

"I don't mind going to the country," said Julie, who realized it would not be easy for her to remain in town, especially since there was always the danger of running

into the hated Bakhtiarov. "Have you seen my husband?" she asked.

"Yes, indeed: very down in the mouth he looks. He's very fond of you, you know. Is he at home now?"

"I think so."

"I'll go and speak to him," said Feoktista Savvishna and went to Pavel's room.

"So you're leaving for the country, Pavel Vasilich? Is it to be for long, may I ask?"

"I don't know."

"And is your wife going with you?" she asked softly. "She wouldn't tell me."

"We're both going," said Pavel.

"In the carriage?"

"Yes, in the carriage."

Having thus elucidated matters, the matchmaker went back to Julie and told her to bid her maid pack her things immediately.

And so the next morning husband and wife issued from their respective rooms without exchanging a word, got into the carriage, and set off on their journey.

The modest country house of the Beshmetevs was not distinguished either by a picturesque situation or by elegant appointments. It was well off the beaten path, surrounded by forest and bog. A smallish house, a few huts for the servants, a barn, a cellar in the yard, a shed, and a lop-sided flour mill were all that was to be found there. During the journey husband and wife, instead of having a confidential talk and trying to get to the root of their trouble, said never a word on the subject. They confined themselves to observations on the objects they passed, such as a ramshackle bridge, a lean cow, or some picturesquely situated villa, but at last combined in united efforts to beat down an innkeeper's exorbitant charges for a night's lodging.

On arrival at their destination they immediately se-

lected rooms at opposite ends of the house, and settled down to suit their respective tastes. Julie hung curtains at the little window of her room, placed her fashionable knick-knacks on the top of the chest-of-drawers, got out her work and began embroidering a knight with long legs. Pavel arranged his books with the intention of losing himself in his studies. They met only at the dinner-table, if at all, and when they did, hardly exchanged a word. Such was the outer pattern of their lives, the natural result of their lack of mutual understanding. By her vile unfaithfulness (Pavel never for a moment doubted that his wife had been unfaithful) the once adored Julie had at a single blow fallen from the lofty pedestal on which my hero had placed her. A more experienced husband would have taken the trouble to find out exactly what his wife had done, and on discovering that nothing serious had occurred, would certainly not have raised a hue and cry, but would have contented himself with giving her a good scolding; or, if his nature were sufficiently gross, he might even have inflicted a couple of lashes on the culprit, and that would have been the end of it. Not so Pavel, whose upbringing had fostered his instinctive puritanism and whose apathetic nature had prevented him from sowing wild oats. He was divided in his feelings for his wife: he still loved the Julie of his imagination, while hating and despising the living Julie, her speech, manners, and conduct. The only reason he went on living with her was that he considered it his duty. Julie, for her part, came to dislike Pavel more every day. She saw nothing wrong in her relations with Bakhtiarov; on the contrary, she had struggled to remain true to her husband. Why, then, had that simpleton been so harsh with her? What had she done to deserve it? Nothing at all. True, she had loved another, but surely she could not be expected to love a dolt like him? She put him down for a fool and would have left him if she had not feared the judgement of society and her father.

To these bitter thoughts was added a still greater hatred for Bakhtiarov, the very thought of whom roused her to fury.

A week, two, three—soon a month had passed. Both husband and wife were dying of tedium. Julie simply did not know what to do with herself. After moping and weeping till she could neither mope nor weep any longer, she usually had recourse to embroidering her knight, till in less than a fortnight his legs were finished, after which a dog could soon be observed lying at his feet. Pavel, who had intended to bury himself in his studies, did nothing; he spent most of his time lying down—brooding over his marriage. He could not help calling to mind the shabby behaviour of Vladimir Andreich, who had been generous with his advice but had not really done anything for his daughter; he recalled the neglect, nay, the cruelty with which Julie had treated his dying mother, the lack of love and even of respect she had shown him, and, finally, the base manner in which she had deceived him, for which, shameless woman, she had been rewarded by even Bakhtiarov's contempt. He heard of the treatment Julie had received at the hands of Bakhtiarov from his servants, with whom he no longer hesitated to discuss his wife. Before he was aware of it, my hero's splenetic mood, his idleness and boredom, led him to increase his daily portion of wine, formerly so modest. As I have already said, dinner was the only occasion on which husband and wife met. By the dinner-hour Pavel was usually slightly tipsy. In this state the antipathy he felt for his wife became so acute that he could not resist tormenting her.

"Come, Konstantin," he once said to the footman standing beside the table, "aren't you thinking of getting married?"

"No, Sir," replied Konstantin.

"Why not, man? It would only be one fool the more in the world."

"Heaven forbid!" said the footman.

"God gave me brains and other gifts," Pavel continued, "my parents spent their last kopek on my education, and what have I done with it all? Married and went to live in the country. All that was needed for this was to eat and sleep till I grew up, and then go on eating and sleeping till I died."

"Who forced you to get married?" retorted Julie.

"My own folly and an unkind fate."

Julie shrugged her shoulders.

"The Portnovs are celebrating a birthday this evening—giving a ball, no doubt," Pavel remarked one day.

He was thoroughly drunk.

"I daresay you would like nothing better than to attend it, Julie Vladimirovna?" he said.

Julie made no reply.

"You would see a certain young man again, make it up with him, he would take you home in his carriage and, perhaps, you would even pay him a visit and spend a pleasant evening with him."

This was too much for Julie, who burst into tears.

"How low! How base!" was all she could murmur as she left the table and went to her room.

She cried for the rest of the day. At first Pavel paid no attention to his wife's hasty exit and her tears, but after sleeping off the effects of the wine he felt ashamed of himself. He asked the servants what his wife was doing. He was told she was lying on the bed crying and had several times taken drops.

For some three days after this the couple did not meet. Julie could not understand what had come over her husband. Until then she had been sure he loved her and that she could do whatever she liked with him: one kind glance of her eyes had been sufficient to make him happy for a week. But now! How dared he continually hurt and insult her? What had made him so bold?

Marfa enlightened her.

"Don't cry, Ma'am," she said, trying to comfort her mistress after one of Pavel's attacks. "He doesn't know what he is saying ... not quite in his right mind ... a little ... er ... tipsy."

"What do you mean tipsy? Does he drink?"

"That he does, Ma'am, and plenty," replied the servant.

"Merciful heavens! As if things weren't bad enough without that!" cried Julie in dismay. "He's a fool and a beast and a drunkard into the bargain! So far he only says horrid things to me, he'll begin beating me soon."

She decided to write and tell her father everything, but then she changed her mind. Vladimir Andreich would be sure to ask Pavel questions and Pavel would tell him what had happened. She did not want that. Whatever the consequences, she determined not to give in to Pavel, but to answer his jibes with threats and upbraiding. And so the antipathy between husband and wife grew from day to day. It is beyond my power to describe their sufferings. They both grew thin and pale; not a day passed but that Julie wept, and as for Pavel—my kindly Pavel became a veritable misanthrope. When he was sober he pined and suffered, but when he was drunk he cursed himself, the servants, his wife, and even Lizaveta Vasilyevna, with whom he ceased to correspond altogether, not answering a single one of her letters.

XVIII
THE NEIGHBOUR

The removal of the Beshmetevs to the country caused a great deal of talk. Rumours of Julie's affair with Bakhtiarov had reached the countryside before their arrival. Several versions of the story were circulated. According to some, Julie, head over ears in love with Bakhtiarov, had visited him late one night and on hearing of this, her hus-

band had gone to fetch her home but had been turned out of the house and had been too much of a ninny to do anything about it. The next morning Julie had been sent back to her husband by Bakhtiarov, who wanted no more of her, and now all was over between them. The more sceptical asserted that the affair was not yet over, that measures had been taken to throw dust in the eyes of society, and Bakhtiarov himself would soon put in an appearance in the country. Whatever the version, all laughed at Pavel and denounced Julie as an immoral woman. The country ladies, especially the more important ones, openly declared that if their new neighbour took it into her head to call on them they would not return the visit. But Julie called on no one. "And she is right," said the ladies. "At least she is clever enough to understand what she had done, and does not wish to compromise others." But despite these insulting remarks, I must confess that there were certain ladies who longed to make Julie's acquaintance, especially when they saw she had no intention of cultivating theirs.

This applied in particular to Katerina Mikhailovna Sanich, a worthy landed proprietress and the Beshmetevs' nearest neighbour. She was now an old woman, and as long as people could remember had lived as a widow on her estate, trying to restore the fortune her husband had squandered. Of uncertain origin, she had made what people openly described as an ambiguous marriage in Petersburg with Sanich, who was many years her elder, and had gone to live in the country with him, bringing with her the fashions and manners then prevailing in the capital. From the very beginning she had displayed sympathy for those in trouble and a tendency to ignore the opinion of her neighbours. Whoever the unfortunate might be—a bailiff discharged for being drunk and disorderly, a wife seeking refuge from a cruel husband, a governess turned away because her employer's husband tried to make love to her—all were sure of sanctuary in the home of the widow Sa-

nich, who kept them under her wing until other arrangements could be made. Hearing of the arrival of the Beshmetevs and of the unpleasant circumstances attending it, and later hearing that the country ladies had resolved not to call on their new neighbour, she made the following declaration publicly: "The lady in question has behaved badly, but we, her neighbours, must not judge her harshly, for the same thing might have happened to any one of us; for that reason I intend to receive Madame Beshmeteva in my home and to call on her myself, and I don't care a fig what anyone says."

"I daresay she wants to borrow money from them," observed a neighbouring lady who was always finding low motives for the actions of others.

The desire to make the acquaintance of the Beshmetevs was shared, though secretly, by certain impecunious members of the gentry who hoped that such an acquaintanceship would afford them the opportunity of gleaning fresh gossip, which they might retail to their more prosperous patrons, as a return for a seat at their tables and the bestowal of cast-off clothes. These creatures had already made several attempts to enter the Beshmetev mansion, but Pavel had given orders for no one to be admitted. Even the kind-hearted widow Sanich might have been unable to fulfil her Christian duty of making the acquaintance of the Beshmetevs, had not fate decreed that this was to be brought about without the least effort on either side.

Julie Vladimirovna attended mass one Sunday, the worthy widow Sanich did likewise, and when the service was over the latter quickly made her way as if quite by chance to Julie's side. Conversation began as usual with trifles—with comments on the fine weather. Katerina Mikhailovna was so kind and gracious that Julie soon opened her heart to her, telling her how bored she was with country life, to which she was completely unaccustomed. Madame Sanich made a point of saying that she knew Vladimir Andreich

very well and had the highest opinion of him. In a word, the ladies became acquainted. Waiving formalities, in the country fashion, Katerina Mikhailovna invited Julie to go home with her, so that she might spend a few hours in pleasant company. Julie thanked her for the kind attention and accepted the invitation eagerly. And so the two ladies set out in the same carriage.

Here I must explain that at this time the generous Katerina Mikhailovna was offering the sanctuary of her spacious dwelling to a French tutor whom a neighbouring country gentleman had brought to these remote parts at great expense, but had discharged after two weeks, saying that Monsieur Michaud (the tutor's name) might know how to break in a horse but certainly did not know how to teach children. The respected paterfamilias was so anxious to get rid of his tutor that he was willing to forego the three hundred rubles he had already paid him, asking only that Monsieur Michaud leave as soon as possible. The tutor found himself in a difficult situation, he had not a kopek left of what he had received and I shudder to think what would have become of him if the benevolent Katerina Mikhailovna, hearing of the straits he was in, had not instantly dispatched her coachman with an invitation to the Frenchman to stay with her. He accepted with alacrity, and leaving his future to the gods, settled down very comfortably on the ground floor of his patroness's house, begging her to find him somebody's son or daughter–to hire one if necessary–so that he could give the child his exceptional sort of education. Here, then, he lived, amusing his benefactress by relating incidents from the life of the respectable country gentleman who had turned him out of his house. The old woman nearly died of laughing as she listened to her "charming Frenchman" (who really was charming). Whether or not he possessed pedagogical ability I cannot say; if he did, he managed to conceal it very successfully. But he possessed many other fine qualities,

namely: like most Frenchmen, he had an expressive countenance, was always elegantly dressed, rode a horse in dashing style, was an excellent shot, played the piano fairly well, and, most important of all—was capable of chattering all day long to suit any mood, could whistle whole operas and give imitations of the orchestra, the soloists, and even the choruses. He spoke such perfect Russian that one could not help thinking he must have been born in Russia, but he assured everyone that he had first seen the light of day on the banks of the Seine, in the district of Saint-Germain, whence he had come to Russia for diversion and to educate youthful Russians. This was the man Julie met at the home of her new acquaintance.

On the way home the old lady told Julie about her charming friend, and as soon as they arrived she introduced him to her. There was no lack of conversation. Monsieur Michaud instantly undertook to give a comic rendition of certain arias from *Lucia,* imitated the orchestra from *Fra Diavolo,* described a breed of horses to be found in Normandy, dilated on the horrors undergone by the crew of a French frigate captured by savages, and in the end drew a caricature of one of their neighbours. Julie enjoyed herself immensely. She forgot her troubles, forgot her husband, and laughed and talked unceasingly. Their kind hostess, too, laughed till the tears ran down her cheeks as she listened to the *"impayable"* Monsieur Michaud who showed his versatility by passing to a melancholy vein, reciting poems by Victor Hugo, rolling his eyes up to the ceiling and telling them about his betrothed who, it appeared, had died two years before. At last, under the stress of his emotion, he sat down to the piano and sang two songs by Schubert.

In this way the hours passed unnoticed. Julie did not want to leave; she would gladly have stayed another day, a week, a month. As she got into her carriage her heart sank at the thought of returning to her barn of a house

and hated husband after having been in such pleasant company.

On reaching home, however, she did not see Pavel, and they only met at dinner on the following day. He did not even ask his wife where she had been the day before.

On Wednesday Julie decided to tell him that Madame Sanich, with whom she had become acquainted on Sunday, was coming to call on the following day. Pavel made no comment, but he left for town before nine o'clock the following morning.

Katerina Mikhailovna came on Thursday and, after exchanging the usual greetings, asked Julie where her husband was. Julie, somewhat embarrassed, said Pavel had had to go to town on very urgent business, but that when he got back he would be sure to come with her to pay his respects to Katerina Mikhailovna, whom, she said, he greatly esteemed. After staying with Julie for two hours or so, Madame Sanich took her leave, exacting from Julie a promise to call the following Sunday. Julie promised, resolving, however, not to take her husband with her, but to plead his indisposition or find some other excuse if Katerina Mikhailovna should ask about him. For that reason she said nothing to Pavel, who behaved as usual on returning from town—that is, kept away from his wife all day and made jibes at her expense during dinner. Julie made up her mind to pay no attention to the fool and endured it all without a word, not even listening to what he said.

On her next visit to Madame Sanich the Frenchman outdid himself. He was so attentive to her that she could not help talking to him all evening, and when she rose to go home he declared his intention of escorting her on horseback to defend her to the last breath from any peril they might encounter on the way. He was as good as his word, trotting beside her carriage to the last turn in the road, and in parting he announced his intention of calling on her within the next few days. Without thinking, Julie

said she would be glad to see him, but on entering the house she remembered Pavel—that odious Pavel. "Oh, well," she thought, "I'll tell him about it tomorrow and no doubt he'll go away again. I can't give up everything on his account."

This decision left her mind at rest.

XIX
DEPARTURE

Although Pavel had not asked Julie how she had made the acquaintance of the kind-hearted Katerina Mikhailovna and the charming Monsieur Michaud, he knew all about it. Petrushka, who had once peered through the keyhole and seen Julie kissing Bakhtiarov, kept just as sharp an eye on her now and gave detailed reports in the servants' quarters of her visits to her neighbour, of the neighbour herself, and of the fascinating tutor. Marfa listened to his story and repeated it to her master that same evening. In this way Pavel found out that Julie had spent a whole evening talking French to the tutor, that the tutor had played the piano and she had listened to him, and that he had escorted her on horseback in the evening as far as the turning leading into the field of winter wheat. For one as suspicious and prejudiced against his wife as my hero, this evidence was more than enough. "Another affair," he decided and swore not to be such a fool this time, and not let the rascal into his house. Having resolved on this, he spoke hardly a word to his wife and left early in the morning to spend the day hunting so as to avoid a disagreeable encounter with her. By good luck Monsieur Michaud chose that very day for his first call. Julie, delighted that he should have come so opportunely, that is, while her husband was absent, was exceedingly cordial and would have maintained this cordiality all day long if she had not heard

her husband return some time after twelve o'clock. Anticipating that her beloved spouse would appear any moment and make a scene, she became so distracted that, unable any longer to sustain the conversation or respond to Monsieur Michaud's pleasantries and attentions, she excused herself by saying she had a headache. The tutor guessed what the trouble was and soon took his leave. This reception and the general lack of attractions in the Beshmetev home made a bad impression upon him and greatly lowered Julie in his eyes. The first time he had met her, the easy grace of her manners and her ability to speak French had led him to believe that she was a society woman and that in her house he could be sure of a good lunch and *recherché* wines and of being received in a boudoir fitted out with the usual feminine knick-knacks. And what did he discover? That her house was furnished little better than a peasant's hut and that she had neither food nor drink to offer him; moreover, she was as taciturn as an owl, despite all his efforts to amuse her.

Here I must explain that Pavel's return home was quite accidental. Before going hunting he had secured himself an experienced companion in the person of Faddey, a neighbouring peasant who had brought down innumerable quantities of birds in his day and killed at least fifty bears. As might have been expected of so impassioned a sportsman, Faddey eagerly undertook to initiate Pavel, led my hero some four miles through swamps, killed two wild ducks and one snipe and kept pushing on, anxious to show the master a place where he said they would find partridges galore. Though he had a gun with him, Pavel's hunting consisted mainly in watching his companion's prowess and he was soon ready to drop with fatigue. On hearing that he was expected to go another five versts he resolutely declined the pleasure; it was all he could do to drag himself home and he made up his mind that hunting was not the sport for him. As soon as he stepped into

the hall he noticed a man's fashionable overcoat hanging there and guessed whose it was. All he did, however, was to go into his room and hurl his gun down on the floor with such force that the barrel dropped off.

He knew he would have to do something about it: either send the footman to tell the Frenchman to go back where he came from, summon Julie and order her to send her guest away, or go himself and insult the man by asking him why he had come. But while Pavel, racked by jealousy and vexation, was considering what means he should use to get rid of Monsieur Michaud, the tutor had left of his own accord, and so my hero had to vent all his wrath on Julie. Meantime, scarcely noticing it, he had drunk several glasses of vodka. Julie was no less furious than her husband. "Good heavens!" she said to herself. "What will that monster drive me to? I can't even receive guests in my own home or spend a few hours a week in pleasant company! He'll drive me to my grave!"

In such a mood husband and wife met at the dinner-table and for some minutes exchanged not a word.

"If that gentleman who was here today ever comes again," said Pavel at last to the footman, "tell him your orders are not to admit him."

"If Monsieur Michaud comes," countered Julie with as much spirit as she could muster, "tell him I shall be glad to see him."

"And I order you not to admit him, do you hear?" said Pavel. "And if he doesn't go away of his own accord, throw him out. Anyone here who wants to see him can do so in the fields, in the road, or in his bedroom, but not in my house."

Julie trembled all over at these words, and, unable to find any retort to such an unmerited insult, fell on the floor in a fit of hysterics. Pavel did not rush to her side as he would formerly have done, but got up and went to his room without so much as calling anyone to her aid. Julie's

fit was genuine and very severe; her sobs could be heard throughout the house. For a few moments Pavel sat as if made of stone, but when he could bear the sound of her sobbing no longer he rushed out of the house and ran to the fields, to the meadows, to the woods, not knowing where or why. When he had gone some three versts he fell exhausted on the grass and began sobbing like a child. It would be hard to recount or define all the emotions that had brought on these tears: jealousy, anger, pity, remorse—in a word, all that can make a man go through a mental hell. And why should these two people have suffered so and tortured each other so? It came of their inability to understand one another, of the difference in their upbringing, and of their utter inexperience of life.

Meanwhile Julie had cried herself out. Her tears had brought relief and when she calmed down a little she resolved to go immediately to Katerina Mikhailovna, tell her everything, and ask her advice as to what she should do. She clearly saw that to go on living with Pavel was out of the question.

The benevolent Katerina Mikhailovna was even more philanthropically inclined than ever, at that moment partly because she had just received one thousand five hundred rubles in rack rent from her serfs, and partly because a pedlar in haberdashery, going the rounds of the neighbouring estates with his wares, had suddenly put in an appearance, and the old lady could amuse herself by considering which of her maids (of whom she had over twenty) she should buy dress-lengths for, what stuff she should choose, and what present she could make the charming Monsieur Michaud, for everything in the pedlar's illiterately written list, which ranged from English tweed to Indian cashmere, seemed unworthy of him. Just then Julie arrived. Katerina Mikhailovna, overjoyed, rushed into the hall to meet her, and seeing that Julie's eyes were red with weeping and her face was deathly pale, cried in alarm:

"What's the matter, my precious? Are you ill, or in distress? Good God! Can it be that any of your dear ones have died?"

Without replying to this heartfelt question Julie squeezed the hand of the kindly Katerina Mikhailovna and asked her to lead her to some secluded spot where they could be alone. This request was instantly complied with. She was taken to the most distant room in the house, which happened to be quite dark into the bargain and served the old lady as a wardrobe; there Julie wept out the story of her miserable life with her husband who, she said, was a drunken sot and would murder her one of these days, and it was only to spare her dear papa's feelings that she had concealed the truth from him and everybody else, but now she could stand it no longer and was ready to fly to the ends of the earth, even to her dear papa, but how was she to do that when she had not a kopek to her name? Her wretch of a husband had squandered her fortune, leaving her with nothing but her diamond ear-rings, necklace, and brooches, which she was ready to offer anyone as security in exchange for the money to enable her to go to her father. Katerina Mikhailovna, who, as the reader already knows, always showed the greatest sympathy for persons in distress, first shed copious tears, and was then moved to ecstasy by the prospect of being able to apply her fifteen hundred rubles in a Christian manner, namely, in giving it to Madame Beshmeteva so that that unfortunate victim of circumstances could immediately betake herself to her dear papa and escape from her miscreant husband. Julie accepted her offer with rapture and gratitude. The two ladies, in perfect harmony, put their heads together to see how they could accomplish their purpose as secretly and inconspicuously as possible. Katerina Mikhailovna insisted on sending a servant for Julie's things and pressed Julie to stay at least a week with her to rest and gain strength for so long a journey. Julie accepted this offer

also. A servant was sent with a note to Julie's maid telling her to pack up Julie's things and bring them immediately to Katerina Mikhailovna's, and if the master should ask any questions to say that these were her orders, beyond which she knew nothing.

The ladies told no one of their intention. Even Monsieur Michaud was only told that Julie had come to spend a few days with Katerina Mikhailovna. Despite the disappointment he had experienced during his visit to Julie, he was glad to hear that she was to be the guest of Madame Sanich.

The liveliness of his disposition was enhanced by his pleasure and never had he been more entertaining than on that first evening of her visit. He joked and punned, whistled the score of *Masaniello* without the omission of a single trill, and even gave an imitation of a Brazilian monkey running up a tree in its terror at the sight of a man, which Monsieur Michaud illustrated by shinning with remarkable agility up the side of the door. After this he seated Julie and Katerina Mikhailovna at the table and told them to pretend to be little girls—Madame Sanich was the absent-minded Katya, Julie, the mischievous Julenka—and Monsieur Michaud arrayed himself in the cap, spectacles, and jacket of an elderly *châtelaine* and, calling himself their governess Madame Grimardeau, held forth with mock eloquence, relating moral tales, rebuking Julie for fidgeting, and Katya for her absent-mindedness. Monsieur Michaud was so delightful in this role and made such comical faces that the footmen and the maids crowding in the doorway were unable to restrain their giggles and the lady of the house and her visitor were almost hysterical with mirth. In this entertaining company Julie was not only soothed, she almost forgot her troubles, especially when the maid who brought her boxes told her that Pavel had not so much as inquired where she was taking them.

We left Pavel out in the fields whither he had fled to

escape the sound of his wife's groans and sobs. When he had calmed down a little, he began pondering plans for a reconciliation with Julie, since he felt that he was in the wrong this time. But how was he to go about it? By having a talk with her? She would not speak to him. By asking her pardon? That would make him appear ridiculous, he could not humiliate himself to such an extent. Should he write her a note, confessing his jealousy and begging her to tell him frankly if she loved this Frenchman, in which case he would propose that they separate, for their mutual advantage, while he, for his part, offered her complete freedom and even a portion of his income. After having come to this decision he returned to the house, where his first act was to ask Julie's maid how her mistress felt. What was his astonishment to hear that Julie, whom he had expected to find at least in tears, if not still in hysterics, had gone to Madame Sanich's, that is, to the Frenchman, soon after he had left her, and had sent a note from there asking for her things to be brought to her. In other words, her hysterics had been mere play-acting, and she had shown her true face by going to Madame Sanich's and sending for her things, no doubt with the intention of eloping with Monsieur Michaud. What if this new lover should treat the shameless creature as Bakhtiarov had done, that is, should turn her out? Was Pavel to accept this fresh insult calmly, too? "I would rather die than let her cross the threshold of my house again!" he said to himself. "Heaven is my witness that I will never live with her again!" Having so resolved, he summoned Marfa and Konstantin and sternly forbade them to let his wife or any messenger sent by her into the house, or to accept any letters. Similar instructions were given to the maid before she set out with Julie's possessions, but, as we have seen, the girl did not tell her mistress this. The stern decision he had come to was too great a tax on my hero's nerves, and he threw himself on his bed in despair and lay there

with wide-open eyes the whole evening and all through the night.

Julie sat in silence a few moments, and then asked Katerina Mikhailovna if she might speak to her alone again, a request that was of course instantly granted. And so once more the two ladies repaired to the dark room at the far end of the house. Julie implored her benefactress to allow her to leave for Petersburg at dawn, saying that she had heard that Pavel intended coming and forcing her to go back to him. Katerina Mikhailovna did not wish to part with Julie so soon, but raised no objections since she thoroughly realized the undesirability of Julie's husband coming to the house and taking her away by force. She, therefore, ordered the carriage which was always at the service of victims fleeing from their oppressors, and was now to take Julie to the town. Julie told her maid to pack her things. The women went about their tasks with as much secrecy as possible, but Monsieur Michaud, suspecting something was afoot, made inquiries first of the servants, then of Katerina Mikhailovna, who considered it her Christian duty to make up a tale about Julie's having to go home for a few days because her husband was ill, but assured him she would come back and spend a whole month with them as soon as he recovered.

The evening proved to be a dull one. Madame Sanich was brooding over the coming parting with Julie, who was about to set forth alone on such a long journey and under such dreadful circumstances; in the end she decided to accompany the unhappy woman at least as far as the town. Julie was worrying about her solitary journey and how her dear papa would regard her actions. The Frenchman was displeased that the women should be meditating plans that were kept from him. They parted at ten o'clock, Julie and Madame Sanich retiring to the latter's bedroom, and the Frenchman to his rooms on the ground floor. When Katerina Mikhailovna was alone with Julie she gave her

the fifteen hundred rubles and was deeply wounded at Julie's offering her a receipt for the money. Julie tried to kiss her hand, but Katerina Mikhailovna took her in her arms and, with tears in her eyes, kissed her again and again, after which she announced her intention of accompanying her to the town.

Monsieur Michaud was still sleeping peacefully when the two ladies, weeping copiously, got into the carriage and set out on their long journey.

XX

THE RELATIVE AGAIN

We now find Perepetuya Petrovna and her friend Feoktista Savvishna, once more seated on the sofa in that very drawing-room where we first made their acquaintance, a few years ago. Perepetuya Petrovna is in mourning again. Both have grown still stouter and their conversation now, as then, is in a melancholy vein.

"It is no light matter to have undergone three bereavements in three years," said Perepetuya Petrovna.

"And I have no consolation to offer you," said Feoktista Savvishna. "The only thing I can say is: take care of yourself. What is your position now? All alone—an orphan, so to speak—and who knows better than I what it means to be alone, especially when you're a woman with no one to lean on for support."

"I'm not thinking of the older ones, my dear. They have lived their lives and we must all come to the same end," said Perepetuya Petrovna. "It's of that poor dear Pavel I'm thinking. Why shouldn't he have gone on living and rejoicing us all? He had only just arrived at manhood. . . ."

The old woman burst into tears.

"Come, Perepetuya Petrovna, calm yourself, I beg of you, you'll kill yourself, and that's a sin!" said Feoktista Savvishna.

"Ah, Blessed Virgin," moaned Perepetuya Petrovna, "there I was living in the country, knowing nothing about it, nothing! All I heard was that something had gone wrong and they'd gone to live on Pavel's estate. You at least might have written me a line, Feoktista Savvishna!"

"Don't say such a thing, Perepetuya Petrovna, don't put any of the blame on me!" said Feoktista Savvishna. "You know me by now, surely—I never poke my nose into matters that don't concern me, especially when it's family troubles. That's why people have such a high opinion of me, because I don't go about gossiping. What could I have written to you? Only what was bound to distress you; think what you like of me, but your health is as dear to me as my own."

"I know, my dear; I am aware of your kind feelings towards me and appreciate them. But you know how devoted I am to my family; I am ready to sacrifice myself at any moment for their happiness. But they wouldn't listen to their old auntie and so everything went wrong. Two weeks passed before I heard she had left him. What am I to do, I wondered? I wrote him a letter, and a very stern one it was: 'Come and see me at once,' I wrote. But he didn't come and didn't even answer. I wrote another. Again no answer. I wrote to Liza in the country. She replied that she didn't know anything either and intended to go and see him. I came to town, went hither and thither —you weren't here at the time—nobody could tell me anything. Suddenly I hear that Vladimir Andreich has arrived and on the next day he comes to see me. I was in a woeful condition—judge for yourself, seeing him again after all that had happened! 'What are our children about, esteemed Perepetuya Petrovna?' says he. 'I'm sure I don't know, Sir; you ought to know better than I,' says I. 'It's all nonsense,' says he, 'and you as a near relative must give them a good talking-to and let them know what's expected of a married couple; I've already given my daughter a piece

of my mind and have brought her back with me. Now you must talk sense to that nephew of yours and together we'll patch things up. The one and only instruction I kept drumming into my daughter's head before we left was: respect and obey Perepetuya Petrovna!' 'No, thank you, Vladimir Andreich,' says I, 'I pointed her duty out to her once and you've no idea how she answered me! Once is enough, thank you!' "

"What an exemplary father Vladimir Andreich is!" put in Feoktista Savvishna. "To come all the way from Petersburg! Nowadays parents marry off their children and that's an end of it—let the young ones fare for themselves!"

"I'm not saying he isn't," replied Perepetuya Petrovna. "He's a clever man, of course, and understands life—but what was I saying? Dear me, I have no memory at all any more!"

"I'm afraid I can't remember, either," said Feoktista Savvishna. "My mind is always failing me."

"Ah, yes: so Vladimir Andreich came to see me and we sat down and had a talk. Julie Vladimirovna came too, and wasn't she meek and mild! Really there was nothing I could find fault with—she kissed my hand and said: 'Do come to our aid, Auntie, we're so young and foolish.' Well, we thought things over and decided to send the carriage for him—my carriage, as if I were the one sending for him. Hardly had we decided on this and before I had really fallen asleep—think of all I'd been through!—when suddenly they wake me up in the middle of the night. 'What's happened?' 'Konstantin's here,' they told me, and my heart sank at the words. In comes Konstantin, and you know what our servants are like, no tact at all, comes right out with it: 'Pavel Vasilich has given up the ghost. He died three days ago.' Holy Virgin! I fell in a faint there on the bed and it was only the next day I was in a state to ask questions. 'Cholera,' says Konstantin. 'Carried him off in a day and a half.' "

"Yes! Yes! Four of my cooks died of the same thing. As soon as I hired them, off they went with the cholera. It mostly takes the drunkards."

"True enough: what can you expect from a drunkard? He gets in a sweat, takes a cold drink, eats something he shouldn't, and there you are! The worst thing is to eat mushrooms; I have a great weakness for mushrooms myself but I stopped eating them during the cholera."

"Tell me this, Perepetuya Petrovna—surely you're in a position to know—is it true what they say—that Pavel Vasilich drank?"

"He did, Feoktista Savvishna," said Perepetuya Petrovna with a sigh. "And heavily, especially towards the end. They say whenever they had a quarrel he'd get drunk and start abusing her—call her this and that—maybe he knew things about her we don't know. They say that's why she left him."

"It seems to me he had that failing a long time, Perepetuya Petrovna," said Feoktista Savvishna. "Remember how you told me even before he was married that he liked solitude? I didn't like to say anything at the time but I thought to myself: he, probably, drinks heavily. I've known people like that—outwardly decent people who were really drunkards, avoiding respectable folk and turning to disreputable society. That was what I was afraid of. 'Soon it'll be discovered that Pavel keeps some creature,' thinks I, 'and that'll be the death of Perepetuya Petrovna.' "

"Oh, no," said Perepetuya Petrovna. "I would never have let things go that far! I'd have scratched out the eyes of any slut he dared to take into his house!"

"Where is Lizaveta Vasilyevna now, Ma'am?"

"Living in the country with her husband. I suppose you've heard that they came into an inheritance? What a noble fellow that Mikhailo Nikolaich is! As soon as he inherited the estate he made it over to his children. To be sure Liza insisted on it, but another man would have

refused. Liza's health, poor dear, has been getting worse and worse, especially after the death of her brother."

"And what has become of Pavel Vasilich's estate?"

"He had everything transferred to his wife's name while he was still alive. Vladimir Andreich came to thank me and I couldn't help telling him my mind: 'Whatever people thought of my nephew,' says I, 'he had a heart of gold. God grant that Julie Vladimirovna may find another husband his equal! Let her marry Bakhtiarov now; then she'll understand!' "

"How's she to marry Bakhtiarov when he's gone off to Odessa, devil take him! I never liked that man, Ma'am—I always thought he was a bad lot. Look at the trouble he has caused! Between you and me, and I hope you won't mind my saying it—look how he disgraced Lizaveta Vasilyevna!"

"I'll thank you not to mention that villain's name to me, may he come to rack and ruin!"

"There's not a drop of shame in the man. I heard he began calling on Mikhailo Nikolaich again after all this happened. Thank goodness, Lizaveta Vasilyevna is a woman of character—she put her foot down and refused to let him in the house. If she hadn't, you can be sure he'd have made trouble there, too!"